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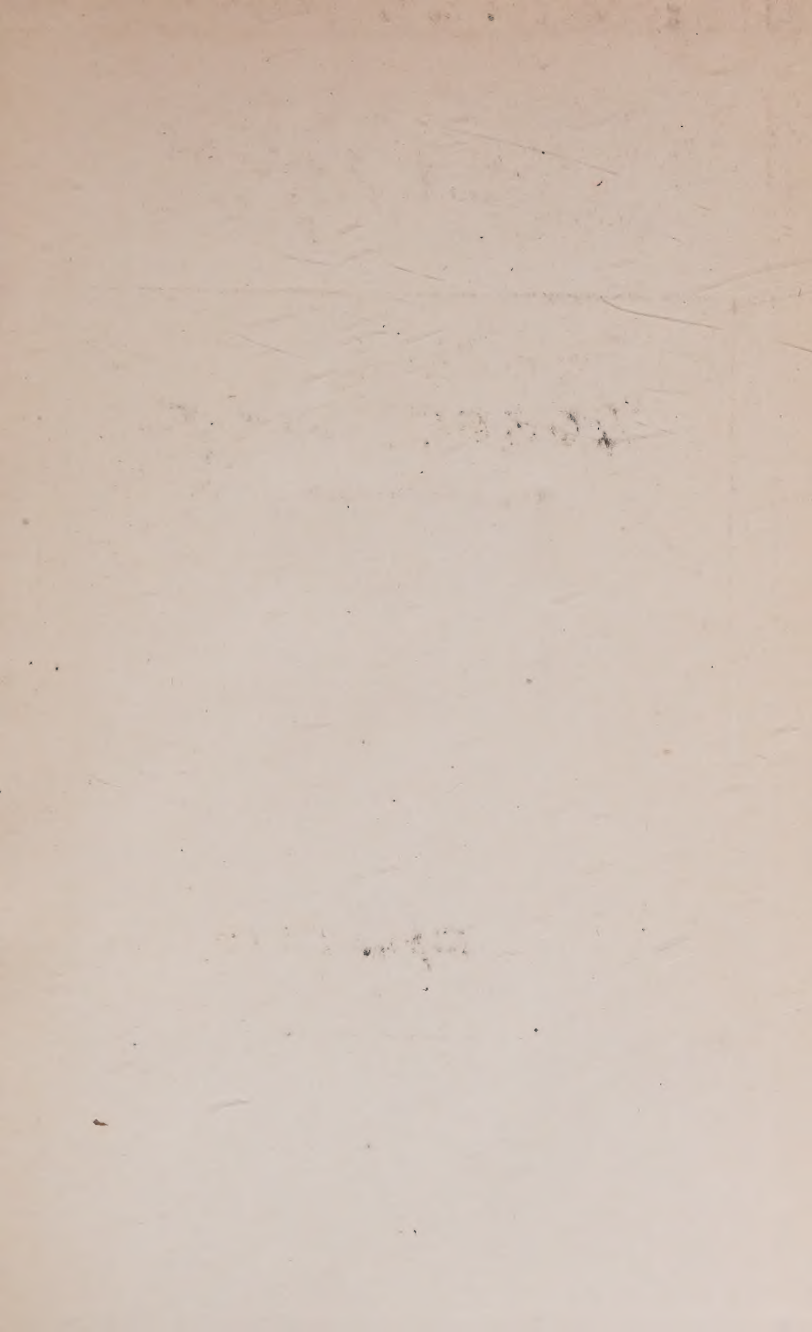
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The Unrecognized Christ

The Unrecognized Christ

By

JOHN GARDNER, D.D.

Pastor New England Church, Chicago



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Preface

THE sermons contained in this volume were delivered at the Northfield General Conference. They were extemporaneous utterances and were delivered to promiscuous audiences. Yet they are the product of much thought, and express the profound conviction of the author that the hope of to-morrow lies in the rediscovery of Jesus the Christ. Jesus of Nazareth was a real person. He has been revered and trusted in by the Church as the "Son of God." He spoke of Himself as the "Son of Man." The apostolic testimony began with the affirmation that He was "the Christ," and the term was official. Jesus was divinely appointed to a work and to a dignity. His adequacy for the task depended upon His *character*. The responsibilities of the office were great, and involved temptations and dangers of an extraordinary kind. Jesus discharged the office, facing hardships, trials, criticisms, and sufferings such as fill us with amazement.

The author has read the Gospels from this

point of view and has tried to make the story warm and glowing so that men shall come under its spell.

The world waits for the gospel of the "Son of Man." Blake felt the spell of it when he wrote:

"For Mercy has a human heart,
Pity a human face,
And Love the human form divine,
And Peace the human dress."

We need to visualize the actual Jesus. While searching the Prophets to discover their testimony concerning Him, and examining the creeds to learn the fullness of the faith by which the Church has lived, we need to see Jesus Himself in His unfolding, to follow Him as He related Himself to life, to look on Him as He appeared to His contemporaries in the discharge of the task to which He was committed by the anointing of the Holy Ghost.

We must preach a living Christ, and preach as those who live under the spell of His glorious personality and achievement. This is the gospel in which the evangelical succession has gloried. It has wondrous potency. Holy George Herbert expressed its mystic quality when he said:

“Love is fleet of foot,
Love is a man of war,
And can shoot,
And can hit, from far.”

The author was gratified to find that not only the ordinary layman but ministers and theological professors were helped by the series as delivered. In response to their request the sermons are presented to the Christian world in the present volume. If they prove suggestive to other ministers and stimulate them in the task of preaching Christ, he will render thanks to God.

J. G.

*New England Church,
Chicago, Illinois.*

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I

THE UNRECOGNIZED CHRIST

In the midst there standeth one among you, whom ye know not.—JOHN 1:26.

WILL you notice a recurring idea? “The light shineth in the darkness and the darkness comprehended it not.” “He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.” “He came unto his own, and his own received him not.” “There standeth one among you whom ye know not.” “I knew him not.” And even after His public ministry is ended and He is taking leave of His beloved ones, Jesus has to exclaim in sorrow, “Have I been so long time with you and yet hast thou not known me, Philip?” This is the theme which runs as a refrain throughout the fourth Gospel,—The Unrecognized Christ.

Most men are lacking in imagination. John Ruskin used to say that only one man in a hundred thousand could see. Ruskin himself could see a diamond in a cinder track

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while in general people saw nothing but rubbish. Many to-day are very much like Wordsworth's Peter Bell, who

“Wandered here and wandered there
Throughout the livelong year,”

in the midst of the most romantic scenery in the world, and yet without hearing or seeing anything worth while. Ever in his wandering he was oblivious of the beautiful or the sublime.

“In vain through each succeeding year
He wandered onward as before.
The primrose by the river's brim
A yellow primrose was to him,
And it was nothing more.”

Some one has been attempting to caricature this failing of ours, and he has told a story of a college professor annotating Shakespeare. The professor discovered those somewhat familiar lines about “Sermons in stones and books in running brooks,” and he was quite sure that Shakespeare would never have said anything so foolish, for since sermons are usually found in books, and stones are in running brooks the text of Shakespeare needs, therefore, to be amended. Most of us are somewhat like

that. We lack imagination. We lack vision. We fail to see even the nearest thing. We fail to discover the miracle in the common day.

But our failure is tragic, when it relates itself to the spiritual world. It is then that we find ourselves continually peering into the dim distances, if perchance some one may appear on the horizon of life who shall bring deliverance, peace, and succour. Or trying to penetrate the stellar depths, if we may see some motion presaging the angelic hosts—or observe something of the form of Him Who is to set the captive free and bring hope, righteousness, and peace to this distraught world. All the while we fail to appreciate the Presence at our side, a Presence so simple yet so sublime, so humble in its mien, and yet so august in its majesty, a Presence clothed in the form of common man, but demonstrated by word and power to have the invincible mightiness of God Himself.

The Church as the individual believer is weak, enervated, through failure to appreciate the presence of the eternal Christ.

When John the Baptist appeared among the sons of men he came into the darkest hour of our human story, and to those who

were weary and waiting yonder for the manifestation of God he was a beacon light. He was the herald of the golden age. His message was that the kingdom of God drew near, that this was the appointed hour when God Himself should be manifest in human flesh and should speak the immortal word. Men came from every quarter and listened to clarion notes as they reverberated through the ravines of the Jordan. They believed his message and were aquiver with intense and eager excitement, anticipating Him of Whom John bare witness, Who was to come in power.

And yet as they mingled in that great crowd, they failed to appreciate the fact that each one among them was a man, and that every man is unique and significant. Hence it was that when One came from Galilee,—a humble Man clad in peasant's robes,—they jostled Him among the rest. They said "He is but as commonplace as each one of us." If they had known it, One was in the midst, One Who had the strange, mystic power to turn tears into laughter and to win the scepter out of the instrument of hate. The failure of the crowd! It was also the failure of the herald; for it is one thing to know and another to believe; it is

one thing to utter the eternal Word of God ; it is another thing to comprehend what God the Lord doth mean when He challenges us. John, the Herald, has to say plaintively and regretfully, " I knew him not."

When John the evangelist came to think over the problem of that day at the great assembly by the banks of the Jordan River, when preacher and hearer alike failed to recognize the Promised One, the problem of his life, for he and his fellow disciples had been equally obtuse,—it was then after long experience and reflection that he awoke to the truth, that Christ is always here, and men always fail to appreciate Him. He it was Who operated through the reason and through the conscience of man. Yet men imagined that the unfolding of the intellect and the emotions of the soul were generated in nerve centers or due to influences which had emanated from society itself. It was only here or there that one among the sons of men awoke to the fact that there was a Presence in our human life, and that in some way or other it would break through, for God Himself, or the Man God, would speak to us, and the word would bring life and hope to those who were receptive.

And as He came in this wise, and men

failed to appreciate Him, so He came in the dawn and in the sunset; He approached men through nature, which was His ever changing vesture. But they beheld not the glory in the cloud, nor in the changing seasons. And when, ever and anon, He came in more personal fashion and challenged the men and the women who could see to the very heart of things, the solitary ones among the generations of the sons of earth, yet they too failed to interpret Him. Realizing the burning within their souls, it made them wistfully peer into the mystic shadows of life, if they might discern some form that should have reality in it. These people were forever crying for that which was remote and retreating, and failed to appreciate the fact that "thou needest not to ascend into heaven to bring him down, or to explore the depths in order that thou mayest discover him; but the word is nigh thee in thy mouth and in thy heart."

When at last He did appear, and challenged the individual who had been prepared for Him, or the multitude instructed in His way, these also failed to appreciate His personality, and ever His mother and His own kith and kin spoke of and treated Him as though He were a common man.

That was the tragedy of the past, in the estimation of this great and Divine writer.

Has the tragedy passed away, or is it still persistent? It is a wondrous thing that a good and sanctified personality should be as the sunrise to human hearts. It is a tragic thing that men and women in association with the Divine should treat it as common clay. That is the burden of the opening message of this Gospel of John the Evangelist. Is that our failure? Are you and I also incapable of appreciating the man who lives next door? Is it possible that if Christ were back on earth we might be walking with Him and talking to Him and yet estimate Him as but a carpenter—a somewhat eccentric man? Is that possible in this present age? Is that the secret, I wonder, of the impotence of society and the impotence of the Church of God? I fear sometimes that it is so.

Any one of us acquainted with the movements of the world to-day is filled with pathos. Somehow or other men and women are conscious that something from without is pressing upon our human life, and they wonder how they may interpret it. Take, for example, the recent writings of Mr. H. G. Wells. Man is groping vaguely

for this thing or this presence which shall somehow interpret life and bring order out of chaos and hope out of despair, and in the Wells case he is inventing for himself what he is pleased to call a "finite god," girding at those who are believers in the trinitarian view of things, girding at what he calls orthodoxy, yet naively admitting, after he has sketched the lineaments of this god who is finite, that somehow or other it is impossible for him to deny that the lineaments of his finite god very strongly resemble the Pauline as against the trinitarian Christ.

Or, again read the extracts from the letters and diaries of soldiers of France which recently appeared in the *Atlantic Monthly*, extracts which might be reproduced a hundredfold from the letters and diaries of the young men of France and England, who have been dying on the field of battle. What is the note which is ever recurring in these letters and diaries? It is: that these young men are feeling somehow that there is One behind their lives whom they ought to know. They are for the main part idealists. Many of them have no true conception of God. Very often the God to whom they devote themselves is a sort of pantheistic Deity, and yet, for all that, they are

constrained to pray, constrained to believe, to trust, to cry out to this Presence Who is with them in the trenches and Who turns their bitterness somehow into that which is suggestive of eternal things. They cry out for what? For the Presence that is always in the world, but Whom they fail to apprehend.

It has been so within the Church itself. You and I are aware of the movement of recent years, the way in which men, preachers, and thinkers, within the Church have been devoting themselves to the newer ideas. Two of the men who have been most prominent in this movement have been Mr. Percy Gardner and Dr. Orchard. Yet in a volume, entitled "The Faith and the War," you find Mr. Percy Gardner writing, "The doctrine of the incarnation, long regarded as a high mystery, has become recognized as the best explanation of human life as revealed to us in the world." And Dr. Orchard in his book entitled "The Necessity of Christ" affirms that all the time the Eternal Presence has been in the midst of men, that if you would find the key to science, to philosophy, to sociology, you must discover it in a full and complete way in the historic Christ, in the Christ of the

creed, in the Christ of the Church; and the admission is made fully and frankly that the impotence of the past generation has been due to the fact that men have been discussing ideas and ignoring God's presence with them in their midst.

Ignoring it? That is a strange thing, and the altogether incomprehensible thing to some of us. What, think you, is the greatest movement of the past hundred years, the most palpable demonstration of power in the material world of men? Some people who are Americans first and last, would say it is the way in which men have redeemed the prairies, and have reduced the solitary wilderness of the Rocky Mountains into a place of habitation, of beauty and delight. Other people who are British would say it is the way in which the British Empire has extended, until at last the flag of Britain floats over one-third of the inhabitants of the earth. Other people who have their dreams would say it is the way in which the German Federation of states has come into existence, and dominated the science, commerce, and politics of the whole world. Yet here is a strange fact, that in the past century a little handful of men and women, representing One Who is invisible to mortal

sight, have gone out into the world and have captured over four hundred different languages, and have created a literature in each of them, and have made the Bible the foundation of the literature of each of these languages; that all through the world the Presence has been marching silently but omnipotently to the falling down of the strongholds of Satan and to the building up of the kingdom of God. The world of to-day bears the impress of His bleeding feet. Along the highways of life where have marched multitudes who were driven by the bayonets of soldiers or the equally merciless pressure of economic forces, the servants of the Christ have gone as the heralds of peace and the publishers of glad tidings, doing the works of the Good Samaritan, giving sight to the blind, opening the prison house to them that are bound. Read the story of the Asia of a century ago and compare it with the Asia of to-day and you will see the transformation through His presence.

Do you think that notwithstanding this you and I and the Church of which we are a part can fail to appreciate the Christ? I fear that the charge is true. He has said, "He that heareth you heareth me; and he

that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me." Were you conscious last Sunday as you worshipped in the sanctuary of the presence of the Lord Christ Himself behind, beneath and within the humble word of him who ministered to you? He has said that "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren ye have done it unto me." Did you realize in your simple, spontaneous act of benevolence towards some weary child of earth that you were actually looking upon the angelic Presence that is from eternity to eternity? He has cried out in the person of His persecuted one, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" Did you see in the poor bleeding form of a martyred servant of Christ some suggestion of the gracious mien of Him Who thorn-scarred was the Lord of Calvary, as He is also the Lord of glory? You would not miss His presence, did you say? "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock." The ever present One, the eternal Christ, has been challenging you and me as He has challenged the entire Church during this generation. He is here now, really and gloriously here.

It may be that some people have made a

failure of their ability to recognize Him Who has said, "I am with you in all the days" through their desire for the coming of the great day when He shall appear in clouds and great glory and claim His kingdom on the earth and rule forever and forever. Yet on the other hand, a multitude of people within the Church have failed for precisely the opposite reason, and if I may again refer to that most interesting book by Dr. Orchard, there is one sentence which I believe to be thoroughly true, in which Dr. Orchard says that men and women are waking up in this present hour to a consciousness that it may be that something apocalyptic is just about to occur, that the Lord Himself is present with us through all the sorrow, the travail, the anguish, the bleeding, the tears of this present moment and is drawing aside the veil that hides Him and that we may behold Him as He sees of the travail of His soul and is satisfied.

I beseech you that you will devote yourselves more and more to the thought that Christ as a real presence, as an immanent Power, as the One Who opens the prison house to them that are bound and proclaims the acceptable year of our God is really in our midst. We so often sing unto Him and

plead with Him, that He should come and come quickly. Let us not forget the fact that He is here.

“The healing of the seamless dress
Is by our beds of pain,
We touch Him in life's throng and press,
And we are whole again.”

And just because you and I know something of the magic touch which can transform all life, which out of impotence can demonstrate almightiness, let us bear testimony to Him to the reality of His presence and power, that so the world around us, which is dimly conscious of His existence, may through association with Him become conscious of rejuvenescence, and know that its destiny is involved in the great and eternal purpose of God!

II

THE TEMPTED CHRIST

And he was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted of Satan; and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered unto him.—MARK I: 13.

THERE are times in the experience of most Christian people when doubts arise as to the reality of the manhood of Jesus Christ. It has always been much easier for people to believe in the divinity of Christ than in His humanity. There are vastly more members of the Church of Christ who believe that He was the second person of the blessed trinity than there are those who occupy a position akin to the Unitarians.

The Christian Church has always had to face that difficulty. It is quite apparent to the student of the New Testament and those who are acquainted with the history of the early Church, that there was no sterner battle fought than the battle for the humanity of Christ. Men said, He was so

unique, so splendid in His own personality, so extraordinary in His insight into truth, in His power of analysis of the innermost emotions of the human soul. He was serene and calm when confronted by the most colossal problems. Did He look upon a body that was dead? Did He gaze into eyes that were vacant? Did He look upon brain diseased? Nothing mattered to Him. He was always regal, always splendid, always supreme, always the Master; and as men came into touch with Him, as they followed Him from place to place, they realized at once that not only did no other man ever speak with the insight and authority that He possessed, but no other man had ever possessed such power over unclean spirits and over all the forces of darkness. Hence it was that quite early in His ministry men began to speak of Him as the Son of the living God, and when He came back again from the dead, men knew He was the Son of God with power. From the very early days of the Christian Church men realized that there had been One tabernacling among them Whose form and Whose visage was the form and visage of the Eternal Son of God.

The problem of the early Church was not

a problem of the divinity of Christ but of the humanity of Christ; and that is the problem that has beset us in this present age. Again and again when I have been talking to people, and particularly to young people, about the problems of living, I have heard them say, "Well, you know, after all, Christ was altogether different from ourselves. It is true that we read that He 'was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin'; but because of His origin, because He was so unique, He was free from our human bias, and temptation did not mean precisely the same thing to Him that it means to you and to me." Now there could be no greater heresy than that. There could be no more fatal mistake in the thinking of individual believers than to imagine that Jesus of Nazareth was not a real man, facing real problems and taking real risks; and it is with reference to this aspect of Christ that we are now concerned.

First of all, as we face the problem of the temptation of our blessed Lord, let us realize what temptation is. Temptation certainly is not sin. When I go out into the world and encounter the circumstances of the common day, when I walk in society and meet with men and women, some of

whom are alluring and all of whom are appealing, I am not necessarily encountering that which is sinful and is bound to be sinful to me. The fact that I have within myself a composite nature, that I have certain animal propensities, that I have an imagination, that I have physical tendencies,—all of those facts do not for one moment imply sin.

Sin lies within the man and not in the circumstances which the man encounters, nor in that thing which suggests a selfish ambition to him. The thing itself is neither good nor bad, neither moral nor immoral. Questions of virtue and of vice are, after all, personal questions. They all belong to you and to me. We are in the world as reasonable beings. We are possessed of a moral nature, we have the power of choice, we have a will. Therefore we are not simply animals. When we go out into the world we encounter the challenge of each new day, the challenge which comes to us through the circumstances of life. We come to alternate routes, alternate courses of action, and since the power is ours so also is the responsibility for the choice. And when we come to these alternate routes, then it is for us to elect whether we shall go

to the right hand or whether we shall go to the left hand.

The problem of sin is the problem of our choice of the right or the left. If we once grasp that most elemental fact in connection with the problem of temptation, then we shall realize how real temptation was to Jesus Christ Himself. Coming as He did into our world, emptying Himself of His Godhead and taking upon Himself the likeness of sinful flesh, and being made man, He came into a real world to encounter real temptation. He "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." He was made perfect through suffering. He resisted unto blood, striving against sin. That is the one great and tremendous fact about the Bible teaching concerning Christ. The sinlessness of Jesus Christ was a real thing, an active thing in Him. He was not a machine. When you speak about virtue, you are not speaking about something that is negative, but something that is positive. Virtue depends upon your election of the right when it is possible for you to elect the wrong. That was the issue which Jesus Christ had to face, precisely as you and I have to face it.

Most of us have hesitated just at this

point, and when we have looked about us in the world, and seen the dire consequences of this power of choice and its exercise; when we have looked upon the sin and misery of our common lot, we have said that if we had been God we would have made a vastly different world from this. We would have made a world in which there were no thorns, and in which during the year there was no frost; we would have made a human race in which the bitterness of parting was altogether unknown; we would have made a man altogether capable of doing what was good and incapable of responding to the choice of what was bad.

We fail to realize that if we had made a being of that kind we should have made a machine and not a man, that for any one of that kind to be good would mean nothing more than for a clock to tick. If we had been making a world, and our world had been of this kind, devoid of all that is evil and devoid of all that is possibly sinful, we should have made a strange world in which there would have been no courage, for there would have been nothing to challenge us; in which there would have been no strength, for there would have been nothing to endure; in which there would have been no

sympathy, for there would have been nothing to evoke it. If we had been its creators, we would have made so strange a world that because there were no tears there would also be no affection, and that because there would have been no sin there would have been no crying to One Who is gracious and merciful. If we had had the making of the world, there would have been no God at all, for we would never have had One to whom to cry, because there would never have been any sorrow and misery to evoke that cry. We would have been like the boy in the fable who wanted to discover a world in which there would be no shadow. After a quest of many years he discovered a world in which there was no shadow—but it was a world in which there was no sun. We would have made it so in order that we and others might be protected from the risks of life and from the bitterness that comes to us in our common days.

The world in which we live is not so constituted. It is a world of most appalling risks, but most beautiful in itself. The garden through which I walk is fragrant and beautiful—the place where God Himself would keep tryst with men. The tree upon which I look is very beautiful in itself, and

the fruit which it bears is good and pleasing to the taste. There is no evil in the tree, there is no evil in the fruit. There is no evil in the garden, there is no evil in my eyesight. There is no evil in my risk. But if now as I confront the challenge of the tree I feel within myself the desire, the ambition to be independent, to be free in this large world, if by exercising my will I determine that I will not only touch the fruit with my hand, but that I will taste it also, that I may discover what the emotions of a god are like, I have elected my emotion, and if that emotion shall result in misery, shame, loneliness, impoverishment and death, I have elected the experience, the penalty, and the disaster.

What an appalling thought! Did you ever meet with any one in your experience who was being killed by the operation of conscience? Some years ago in my early ministry, I had to see a man die through the operation of conscience. He was very interesting, beautiful to look upon, gracious in manner, well-informed, and a capable business man. He came to live in my parish and developed a great deal of enterprise during the early days of his sojourn in that district. Then he became ill. The

doctors could do nothing for him. He was dying, and I was asked to visit him. Several times I was closeted with that man, until one day it seemed to me that I must do something most drastic, and so I arose and walked across the room and placed both my hands upon the man's shoulders and looked straight into his eyes, and said, "Man, you have got something on your conscience, and I want to know what it is!" He looked here and there, and then he burst into a flood of tears, and he said, "You are right." And this was the matter with his conscience. I have got it all locked up in my strong box now in a simple little legal document. Some years before, although he was married and lived on the happiest possible terms with his wife, he had confronted a temptation. He had toyed with it. At last he had allowed it to master him, and he had yielded. Then the consequences followed, and he tried to gather them up and hide them, he tried to act the generous part towards the person whom he had betrayed,—as honourably as a man could under those circumstances,—and he provided as best he could for her and for her little one. Then he pulled himself together and tried to live a clean life, and I believe he

succeeded. He dwelt with his wife; he went to church; he went about his business. But day by day and year by year conscience tracked him, tracked him, tracked him to the grave. It was the most pitiful, the most awful thing that I have ever faced during my more than twenty years of ministry.

The thing lay in the man. The emotion which stirred him in itself was human. It was a part of the endowment of God. But when a man, says Christ, built as a man is, with all the powers and faculties of a man, going through the circumstances of human beings, deliberately ceases to be rational, moral, and spiritual, and becomes an animal, determined to gratify his animal propensities even though he destroys a soul and sends it wailing through time and through eternity, then a man sins within himself.

Now in the life of Jesus all of that had to be withstood, because Jesus had to go into our world. He became a man in order that He might travail for the sins of men who had gone their way to their doom. We have not been thinking enough during these recent years—I do not know how my brethren in the ministry have felt about it—but it has been so easy for us to lay hold upon certain glib phrases and to imagine

that in that way we were explaining the awful mystery of redemption and what it meant for us to be delivered from the bondage of sin. For instance, some fifty or sixty years ago, certain clergymen in England, and later in America, began to talk about God dying upon Calvary. Have you never heard that phrase? It was God Who died on Calvary!

Our forefathers would never have used an expression of that kind. It was not God dying upon Calvary. It was Jesus Christ, Who was born of the Virgin Mary, Who died upon Calvary. It was Jesus Christ, Who was possessed of a real body and a real mentality and a real moral nature, Who went our way and fought with the evil beasts that beset our days and subdued them one by one, Who, confronting the issue, taking the risk, sweating great drops of blood, kept clean and sinless, walking a way that was solitary, the way of anguish, the way that was so awful that He sought through bitter crying and tears to escape it. It was that way and only that way that a man could go who should be worthy to die for the redemption of men. Do not empty that tragic hour on Calvary. It was the consummation of thirty-three years of trial. A Man,

in a world which we had vitiated, came to do a work, came to unlock prison doors, that we human souls might walk upright, clean-hearted, clear-eyed, through this world which God made.

In His temptation, realizing that it was a most real thing, I want you to notice just what was the immediacy of the challenge which confronted Jesus. The circumstances are, of course, quite familiar to you. For thirty years He had been unfolding from less to greater, growing in wisdom and in stature and in favour with God and man, entering into the life of His people, entering into the history of the Jewish race, reading the Scriptures, pondering upon the message of the prophets, unfolding through youth and manhood up to the great but tremendous hour when the challenge came to Him. In the Baptism of John He set Himself apart to the Messianic work, and waited for the anointing from God unto the office and vocation of the Christ. And when He was baptized of John in the Jordan, and when the voice spoke to Him there, to the innermost soul of Him, "Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," then the Holy Ghost came upon Him and anointed Him, and the wonderful thing that

had happened to Him impelled Him to solitude.

Then out into the wilderness He went to face His vocation, to realize precisely what He was to discover for Himself, the significance of this key which was now placed in His hands, whereby He was to open the prison house to them that are bound. And it was there, whilst facing the whole issue, whilst peering into the distance and realizing that the way along which He was appointed to go was the way of sorrow, the way of a man of grief, realizing that now He must go out into the unknown to bear the sin of many, to be "despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief," realizing all that, at last He comes face to face with certain immediate issues, and He is tempted along three ways with which you and I are immediately acquainted. He is tempted along the way of comfort, and fame, and power.

First of all, He was tempted along the pathway of comfort. He was in the wilderness because of a spiritual experience. He was in the wilderness, having elected to go there. It was perfectly possible for Him to terminate the hunger at once. He had only to turn His face towards yonder village, or

towards yonder tent, and the hunger might immediately be assuaged. But He was here as One Who was realizing Himself, One Who was discovering His own soul, One Who was entering into the eternal purpose of God. Power He undoubtedly possessed, but it was not the power which was to make it perfectly easy for Him to dwell in a desert place and feed at the banqueting table of God without any immediate effort on His part. He was human, and He must therefore face the responsibility of our human career. He had elected to go our way, to carry our burden, to solve our problem, and He must do it with our resources. That was His first temptation, the temptation to use the power which He might use when He confronted a multitude of people who were a long way from home, who were exhausted with their travelling, and had nothing to eat. But He must not use this power in order that He might dwell in comfort.

The other temptation which came to Him was equally subtle. It is inevitable, if a man is to be a leader of men, the guide of a whole nation, of a whole generation, leading them into the way of God, building up the kingdom of God,—it is inevitable that he should become famous. Fame came to

Christ. It was inevitable that it should come to Him, but the suggestion that in a moment of time, just because He had a consciousness within Himself that He was the anointed of God, that He should go to the pinnacle of the temple, and there in the midst of the thronged streets of Jerusalem He should throw Himself down, and a great, stupendous and extraordinary act should take place, the angels bearing Him up lest He should dash His foot against a stone, that He should in this wise gain fame and enter upon His career, beginning in this spectacular fashion—that He should do this He knew could not be. It was a temptation which was real and tremendous in its appeal. It must be rejected by this Christ, Who, if He is to be known among men, if He is to be famous among men, must win His fame by His character and by the thing He must be when He walks through the common streets, in connection with common affairs and common experience.

So again, the temptation to power, such a temptation as came to Christ, was most subtle and most real. It has come to many men since Christ. It came to Napoleon. It has recently come to another of the crowned heads of Europe, the idea that,

after all, we peoples are a number of little nations, and that a strong man may exercise his lordship over these groups. The exercise of power, political power! "If Thou wilt bow down and worship me, I will give Thee all the nationalities that are on the face of the earth!" Worship me! The spirit of worldliness. There is the temptation that came to Christ, a temptation that was real and pressing, a temptation that had strong appealing power. But He chose to win His power and His authority over men in a different way from that. Seeing the alternate routes, He chose to walk the way of sorrow, the way of love, the way of sacrifice, the way of death, and through that way at last He was able to say to men, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth."

It was along this way that the Master trod, passing alternate routes, having the real power of choice. He chose the way of righteousness and self-abnegation. He chose to follow the will of God, and that only, and at all risks and all costs of His fidelity. Men who looked upon Him said, "He is sinless;" and because of His sinlessness He was able to make an offering of Himself unto God whereby you and I may

be delivered from the bondage of sin and enter into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

As we Christian people come to realize more and more all that was involved in the surrender of Christ; as we come to realize His kinship with us in the common experience of our lives, we are going to feel, first of all, the challenge of comparison, for what He was as He trod our own common earth, possessed of our human nature, that we ought to be. Every one of us knows that he ought to be like Christ. He left us an example, that we should follow in His steps. "Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin," says the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews. The implication is that we should have done so; the manifest fact is that we have not done so. When I discover that I have not, and that He did, then I know that I have fallen from that estate. Here is the measure of my sin and my disgrace. Here is also the measure of the ladder that I must climb, if I am ever to stand before God. It is that consciousness of the distance between myself and Christ which is the measure of my sin. And how far it is!

Did you ever talk to any saintly soul about

the vision, any man or woman who had spent long years in striving through the grace of Christ to become pure, to be sanctified, to be set apart as a vessel that is meet for the Master's use? Were you not impressed by the fact that the further they got on with the journey the further it seemed to them to be from the goal? The nearer, as we imagined, that they were approximating to Christ, the greater appeared to be the distance to them, and He was always to them in those moments not merely "a good paragon, a crystal Christ," but something vaster, something greater, something more, and more remote than even that.

So the consciousness that He encountered my difficulty and my temptation and yet was and is what He is, is the measure of my failure and my need. That is the first tremendous fact, and I am sure that we people in the Christian Church need to realize it once more. We are so self-complacent. We go through the incidents of the ordinary day, and, notwithstanding all of our profession, we kneel down and pray at night in the most perfunctory manner, "I have sinned! O Lord, forgive me. Thou art my Saviour; therefore I sleep in peace." Ah, in the present day there is very little

travailing of soul, very little of that travailing of soul which characterized our fathers. We people in church are very seldom heard saying now, "Where is the blessedness I knew when first I saw the Lord?" because the ambition to be Christlike seems to be wanting among us. I am sure the Christian Church will allow me to say this word. She is impoverished because she fails to regard her Lord and to measure herself according to His imperial standard.

Because He went through my travail and won the battle, because He was made "perfect through sufferings," and did not flinch from the pain, because He "resisted unto blood, striving against sin," I am therefore able to look to Him not merely as one of my own kind who fought His battle and won it, but as One Who in the midst of His struggling, of His fighting, of His resisting, engaged to do it not merely that He might glorify God on His own part, but that somehow or other He might fight the battle with all its implications for me and you and all His human kindred.

It was a great, tremendous, colossal task which He undertook, that with all the risk He would be good, pure and fully consecrated to righteousness, truth, justice and

brotherhood for the sake of all the sons of men. When I know that He conquered, when I know that God, using one of our own brethren as His anointed, saw Him emerge at last as One fully consecrated to the doing of His holy will, and accepted Him, then I know that the prison house is open, that the chains are broken, that I, my captive soul being set free through the grace which is mediated through Christ, may now begin the onward march, may now begin the triumphant process which, somehow or other, some when or other, will enable me in some way, not merely to suggest Christ, but also to attain unto His full-grown manhood.

That is the apostolic vision. May it come to us, and because of its glory, because of all its implications, because it means that I become associated with the blessed fraternity of those who through their lives, their prayers, their purposes, would take part in the eternal purpose of God and hasten its consummation, in which many sons shall come to glory, I shall find that life has been altogether worth while! My God has redeemed me to Himself as a peculiar person, one who is separated and consecrated unto good works, unto the doing of the will of my Father Who is in heaven.

III

THE TRANSFIGURED CHRIST

But Peter and they that were with him were heavy with sleep; and when they were awake, they saw his glory.

—LUKE 9: 32.

THIS earth is a tragic spot in the universe of God. So small a speck among the stellar hosts and yet the scene of so much discord! In the midst of His eternal workings it has become supreme in significance, for on it is to be realized the eternal purpose. Here One appeared bearing the image of the Most High; here God Himself became incarnate. Yet here has been enacted an awful tragedy, even the loss by man of his birthright, the spoiling by man of that to which all the divine actions had tended, the commission by man of that which brought sorrow to the heart of God.

All creatures on earth seem to be happy in the pursuit of their instincts. They have

the desires of the animal, and if their desires are fulfilled they are happy and content. But man is so constituted that he cannot be satisfied by the gratification of desire. Amid all his enjoyments he finds that unhappiness and misery are his lot. His youth is gilded with fair dreams, but the vision passes e'er manhood dawns. The quest of knowledge, fame and power adds zest to every day, yet their acquisition brings disappointment. The dawn of love seems the harbinger of endless bliss yet pain and sacrifice lie at its very heart. The sweetest songs he sings tell of human woe. Something is missing from his experience, something which he believes to be his right, something which in the beginning his forebears were permitted to enjoy. Each man in his procession through the years is a repetition of the tragic experience,—a struggle to look upon and hold communion with the Spirit that is in the world, and failure because of defect in himself.

Sometimes the tragedy is deepened through man's surrender to evil passion. Look into yonder home so sad and wretched through misery and sin. Look at that man, with a brain all maddened with drink, and a face livid with passion, hissing horrid oaths,

through clenched teeth, with hand upraised and ready to strike dead that tender, helpless, loving woman. He does it—but in the committal of the act his soul awakes and he rushes out into the dark and awful night, nevermore to escape from himself. Unlike other animals he knows that in taking a life he has committed a crime. For within man there dwells an eternal spirit and in each personality there is a sensitive conscience compelling him to give moral value to his actions. Each man coming into this world witnesses this constantly repeated tragedy, for he awakes to the consciousness of personal sin and guilt. In writing the story of each man's life we have to record dissatisfaction, failure, and remorse. Our human story is one of misery.

Upon this small speck in the universe of God something great and wondrous has taken place, even the drama of the Redemption. For here in the midst of the sons of men One has walked in human form, possessed of a real, quivering and sensitive human body, of a human reason and will, confronting risks. He has come into this world and engaged in the sublime task of facing our sorrow, our sin, and our despair, and through it all has won a beautiful, re-

splendent crown for Himself. Yea, not only for Himself, but for those who are His kin.

The point upon which I lay emphasis is that when Jesus emptied Himself of His Godhead and came into this world and took upon Him the form and likeness of our flesh, that which He took upon Himself was real. We Christian people fail in our comprehension of the Atonement, and we fail in appreciation of the significance of our Christian life, because we will not believe that Jesus of Nazareth was a real man. The difficulty of the Christian Church has not been with the divinity of Christ. The vast majority of believers in this present day do not hesitate to ascribe unto Him all the glories that are expressed in the ancient creeds; but as in the beginning, so now we do not believe as we ought to believe that Jesus of Nazareth was a real man, taking a real risk, facing real temptation, confronting real sin, just as you and I; and fighting it only with the weapons which are in your hands and mine. That is the big problem. We have to face it. We have to consider His manhood.

Let us look at the Master in this period of His career. Having been anointed as the

Christ, having been baptized with water and with the Spirit of God, He embarked upon His great and wonderful mission. He preached the Gospel to the poor, He bound up the broken in heart; He proclaimed the acceptable year of God. He broke the fetters of imprisoned souls. He did all those great and gracious things which He came to do, until He reached a point where the sons of men, looking upon Him, responded to His challenge and said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." He had been in the world working the works of God, and they said, "These are the works of God. Christ is God." He had been in the world uttering truth eternal, and they said, "These words are the words of God." They were impressed with the truths He uttered; with the character He revealed; with the things He did,—and they called Him Christ. If He had paused there, would they have become Christians? If what we had in the world to-day were merely the example of Christ, the teachings of Christ and the fact that He had personal mastery over sin and sickness and sorrow, would we be Christians? No. If His revelation and work had stopped there His first disciples would have been admirers of His genius, but

they would have remained in the existing order with no more knowledge or ability to do the works and conform themselves to the will of God than before. In the early days of Christianity men knew that such a conception of Christ would not have been enough and we know it would not have produced the record of the Christian centuries nor would it have produced the Christianity of to-day.

The imitation of Christ may be the desire of multitudes. The power to imitate Him is the problem. The way of Redemption has been the problem of the great souls of the world in all ages. Yonder in Persia, before Jesus came into the world, men had been dreaming and thinking about that which lies behind all natural phenomena, which somehow is related to us and controls our destiny. And they had come to believe that somehow or other One from the heavenly places was drawing near to us. In the religion of Mithras they developed a great and wonderful idea which had wide influence in the Roman Empire. And down in Egypt a man named Philo was thinking over the same eternal mystery and speaking about the *logos*, about the Word, and feeling that a purpose, the purpose of

God, must come to expression in our world, in order to do for us that which we could not do for ourselves. Over in Greece men were thinking and pondering upon the problem, and they said God must come or a man-God must appear to help us even by dying for us, or else man must go on to suffer and to die without light or hope.

Right in the heart of all this thinking and yearning of the world, the Hebrew people for hundreds of years had pondered the problem, and they said: "We must be delivered. It must be possible to be men and women of righteous purpose, living in a just world in happiness and gladness of heart, and if it is to be possible, there must be some one somewhere and at some time who will not only declare the word of God and work the works of God, but who will suffer for our sins and not for his own." This vision of the centuries the young Man of Nazareth unfolded in His own personality. Using the word of God, which every man might use, kneeling at the throne of grace, which every man might approach, He engaged in the task of fulfilling the Christly mission. Now, after months of expression through word and deed of the mind and purpose of God, He heard this confession from men who

were His followers, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." He then stood up to say to His own soul as well as to theirs, "The Son of man must be rejected by men, and put to death upon the Cross."

Now what did He do when He awoke to the fact that because He was the Christ He must face death for other people's sin? He did not approach the problem officially. Oh, the pity of officialdom! Those of us who are ministers of Jesus Christ, do we not realize that a great deal of our impotence arises from our officialism? We go into our pulpits as officials; we preach official sermons; and we offer official prayers; and we pay official visits. We imagine that officially we can minister God unto the souls of men! This was the failure of the Jewish priesthood. Holiness to them was a vestment and not a condition of soul; reverence a genuflection and not awe of the majesty and righteousness of God; purity was a washed hand and not a cleansed imagination; obedience was an aloofness from certain common practices and not a glad acquiescence in the will of God. Their souls were blind, they were remote from God and devoid of sympathy with humanity in its travail, yet imagined themselves agents of

the Most High and the only channels by which His grace might be communicated to men.

Jesus did not trust in that which He had discovered in Himself. He did not say, "I must embark upon this career, walking warily and doing the work committed to me to do, going from one errand of mercy to another, and hope that when the great hour of crisis arrives, I shall be equal to its responsibility." He was a real man and He had available those resources which belong to you and me. The method which He employed was the method which you and I ought to employ. He approached His hour of trial along a human pathway. In simplicity, in lowliness of mind, He sought to realize in fellowship with the Father the significance of His mission and the strength whereby it could be fulfilled.

Having declared that He must go and be crucified, He took Peter, James and John with Him into the mountain, not to be transfigured before them, but to pray. It was not His object to display unto them the celestial glory which enshrined Him, in order that when at last He appeared to be defeated they might remember the stupendous event and thereat find their faith re-

stored. I do not think that when He was transfigured He knew it. That was something other people saw. He was Jesus the Christ, pleading, praying, interceding with God for power to engage in the task that had been committed to Him. And because He pleaded, and because He prayed, the *shekinah* glory came upon Him, and He wist not that His face shone.

Why is it that we know so little of the shining face? When Moses went into the mountain to commune with God, he was transfigured, and when he came down to his task on the plain, men were astonished at the vision of the shining face. When the Apostle Paul appeared among men, they said he had the face of God, and when he was writing to an ordinary church with all its infirmities, he said, "We all with unveiled faces, reflecting as a mirror does, the glory of the Lord, are transfigured into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the spirit of the Lord." Why do we know so little about it?

He went up into the mountain to pray, to pray for strength, to pray for the obedient soul, to pray for courage, to pray for fidelity. He went up there to pray for the very things that you and I need.

He prayed, and the men who might have been transfigured with Him went to sleep. The pathos of those sleeping disciples always affects me profoundly. When they were in Gethsemane, the same three men nearly missed the same glory. They nearly missed the glory which came to Jesus while they were asleep, the glory of the *shekinah*, the glory of Moses and Elijah talking with Him. And they almost missed it in Gethsemane. They could not pray for an hour, and they almost missed the angels who held the cup to His holy lips. Alas, that we miss the glory! We might know it, we might see it, but our eyes are blind, for we will not pray. The last thing that we Christian people dream of doing is to pray, really enter into the Holy Place and surrender heart and will to the worship of our God.

It was a man, remember, with a human body, a human soul, a human reason, a human risk, who prayed. Do not imagine that there is anything more extraordinary or miraculous in the appearance of Moses and Elijah than there was in the glory as it came to Him. His face shone, and Moses and Elijah came and talked with Him concerning His death, Moses, who had been carried by angels to his burying, and Elijah,

who had been translated in a celestial chariot, Moses and Elijah who had travailed for the souls of men, who struggled with the problem of Redemption, who were pioneers in that order of the Prophets who came to see that ultimately One must appear who should bear the sins of many. The travail of the Prophets was at last to find its answer in the Redemption accomplished through the offering of the Son of Man. Why treat the story as strange and unnatural?

Modern folk are always looking inquisitively into the spiritual world. Have you read "Raymond," by Sir Oliver Lodge? It is one of the most pathetic things ever produced. The great scientist urged by his sorrow must go to a medium, a woman who is capable of psychic disturbances, in order that through her he may come into some sort of relationship with his dead boy and talk with him even if it be about trivialities. Our scientist does not imagine that there is any difficulty about talking with the departed concerning the other side, though he must have an excited and psychically disturbed woman as his medium.

Do not imagine that the appearance of Moses and Elijah is so extraordinary. It

was inevitable. Heaven has always been a great deal more interested in you than you have been interested in yourself. Why! the Lamb was slain before the foundation of the world. Ever since the Christ appeared in the world and proceeded on His journey to the Cross, angels had been trying to peer into the mystery of it, and whenever any one heard Him or even felt His touch, as He went about Galilee, the angels began to sing. There is joy among the angels when a man comes to himself. Heaven has always been interested in Christ. Heaven has always been interested in holy men and women who have gone into the Inner Presence to pray. It was through that intercession that the glory came to the Christ, and it was in that intercession that God Himself went further than He had gone at the baptism, in His acknowledgment of His Anointed. In the baptism He had said to Jesus in the inner shrine of His soul, "Thou art my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." Now, out of the cloud, there comes the voice to the souls of the men who were present, "This is my beloved Son: hear him." Under the authority of this new commission Jesus embarks upon the second period of His career as the Christ, as One

openly declared by God to be appointed to this task, not merely of uttering the words and doing the works of the Father, but of dying for the sin of the world.

There is one other thing that we ought to notice in the life of Jesus the Christ. On the holy mount, He is there as One Who has accepted our conditions, and is therefore an Example for us to copy in the sacred and eventful hours of our experience. You observe that even after the glory has come to Him, and the Divine approbation has been heard, after the vision has waned, He does not immediately return to His task. He does not start down the mountainside as He might have done, and as you and I most probably would have done. He stays for twenty-four hours to think it out. Calm, deliberate, resolute, yet fearful, He pauses to realize the significance of it all! I think one of the most regrettable things in our ordinary public worship is the way in which we folk who have spent an hour together in the presence of God, in the study of the Word, in prayer and in listening to the preacher, will be talking, within two seconds after the benediction, about the weather, crops, or bonnets. We do not give ourselves a chance. How can we be other than

imperfect people? How can we hope to have self-control? How can we live as we ought to live when we treat prayer in such a way? Would that we knew the art of meditation! Would that we knew how to be still and know that He is God!

While the power that came to Jesus equipped Him for the journey to the cross, it was also the power that made Him ready for the task of to-morrow. There is always the morrow after prayer. When we go down the Mount of Transfiguration with Him, I feel as though we were looking upon one of the most tragic incidents in the religious history of the human race. Behold that poor epileptic boy, afflicted and tormented, yet the subject of a cynical jest perpetrated by the religious leaders of the day to put to naught the disciples of Jesus of Nazareth. And behold the father, who was so despairing that he allowed his boy to be used in this fashion, while the leaders of the day cynically asserted there was no hope for the victim, and the disciples of Jesus, who had been commissioned to go forth and cast out devils, stood impotent. When Andrew, James, and John came down from the holy Mount, they too were powerless.

There is the pathos of an impotent

Church! And the Church is just as impotent to-day. For did you ever enter into association with any branch of the Church of Christ which could define itself? I have not. I have never yet been in an assembly of Christian people who could tell us what Christianity is. How many Christian men do you know who, if you ask them to-day, "What is Christianity?" would be able to tell you? I mean in living terms, in terms that relate Christianity to sorrow and sickness, sin and death. There is the shame of our present time! We confront a problem. We are supposed to be possessed of power, and we are not able to define our relationship to the problem.

It was not so with Jesus. Remember still that He was One Who had emptied Himself and taken upon Himself our form for our task; and coming down from that holy Mount of prayer and vision and power was serene and calm, strong and adequate for the task.

The outstanding argument for Christianity is not the argument of the philosopher or the metaphysician. It is the argument of transfigured lives. When we see men who aforetime were sunken in the horrible pit and miry clay rescued and restored,

and now doing the works meet for repentance and singing praise to Christ, we know that Christianity is real. Our Christian missionaries tell of extraordinary experiences. The story from Terra del Fuego moved Sir Charles Darwin to acknowledge that he was in the presence of something bigger than anything he ever imagined. Here were a people in a degradation so great that he thought they might be the missing link between the monkey and the man. The story as he told it reached the ears of a young English student, and it awoke a challenge in his soul to take Christ to them. Through the power of Christ they became, many of them, strong, beautiful, human, saintly, so that in a few years Darwin was so amazed that he felt constrained to give of his substance to help in so wondrous a work. Similar accounts come from Africa, from China, from India,—everywhere, where the Gospel is taught and lived by those who have discovered the secret of Christ in themselves. The annals of modern missionary enterprises are burdened with the story of Him Whose touch has still its ancient power. We believe Him to be what He is because His works follow Him—the works displaying that power to emancipate souls

and to open the prison house to them that are bound, which the prophets believed an anointed man should accomplish, and which Jesus appropriated to Himself as He embarked on His career.

There is the wonder of that work which God has done for us! Brethren, let us learn to love and adore our Christ. Let us learn to gauge ourselves by Him. We do it when we wake up to discover ourselves as sinners. Oh, how great is our sin! We do it as we embark upon the task of striving after saint-hood. Oh, how hard is the battle! It is not easy to be good. It is not easy to be Christlike—but it is possible. Only, if we would know the rest of soul which is His secret we must share His travail. We must pray. We must trust. We must obey. We must work the works of Him Who sent us while it is day.

May the grace which is concentrated in Him, and through Him mediated unto us, be our daily portion that so we may follow in His steps!

IV

THE ANOINTED CHRIST

She hath done what she could: she is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying.—MARK 14:8.

THE problem involved in the office of the Christ is that of the solution of the tragedy of the universe, the problem of the rediscovery of man, and therefore of the fulfillment of the eternal purpose of God. It was in this little spot in God's great universe, and among men and women, that the tragedy occurred; and it is here that the great undertaking has had to be faced by God and by man, whereby the effects of it might be forever removed.

We are attempting to discover the way Jesus solved the problem, and up to the present time we have considered certain facts. First of all, the removal of the terrible burden which rests upon our humanity could not be effected by the killing of God. We have seen that that phrase is not only erroneous but expresses a heresy of the

worst kind which has crept into some of the thinking and writing of our modern day, largely through the influence of the Roman Catholic Church. The councils of that church described the Virgin Mary as being the mother of God, and out of that phrase they have come to speak about God dying on the Cross. God could not die upon the Cross. If God had so died our hurt would not have been cured, for He did not belong to our sphere. Nor could an angel do this redemptive work for us. Angels are ministering spirits sent forth to minister to those who are the heirs of salvation; they are intensely interested in our problem—but no angel dying for us could have effected a cure. Nor could it have been wrought by a man appearing miraculously for one moment of time and offering himself in that one moment on such a cross as Christ was stretched upon.

None of these deaths could avail us anything in solving the problem of our redemption. The truth we must face is that the problem of redemption is so profound that in order that it may be a realized fact on which we can build, some one must come into this world, facing our risks, confronting our temptations, walking our way, and yet

in everything be spotless and sinless, consecrated, obedient unto God, whatever the cost, whatever the risk, whatever the anguish. He must learn obedience by the things that He suffers; He must be made perfect through suffering. He must make His soul an offering unto death; He must calmly and deliberately face the whole tremendous responsibility involved in being the Christ, and as the Christ He must ultimately come to the point of willingly surrendering Himself on the Cross to die at the hands of His fellow men and on their behalf. That is the full significance of the Gospel story as it enters into our understanding of the Atonement.

God could and did give His only begotten Son. In doing so He gave His mightiest gift. If He had given the wisest and best of His creatures He would not have given His biggest gift. If He had given Himself He would not have done so much as when He gave His only begotten Son. This is the glory of the Christian Gospel. But the act of redemption was itself wrought out by that Son emptying Himself of His godhead and becoming a full and complete man.

The Atonement was the full life of Christ from birth to death, His being, a life conse-

crated to God at any risk, or cost or pain, and at all hazards. This is a fundamental fact which we must have in mind, and from this point of view we have been looking at the temptation and transfiguration of Christ. Now we come to the anointing of Christ.

In facing this problem the first thing to be observed is that in the whole career of the Christ, Jesus was seeking for the friendship of men, for their understanding of Himself, of His life, of His attitude and relationship to God and to men, that somehow or other they might enter into sympathy with it and come into partnership with Him in the discharge of it. And His challenge when He was upon the earth, as His challenge ever since, centered always on this one point, that you in your personal life must give consent to the fact that in undertaking this task He undertook the right task; in following this road He followed the right road; in facing life with those powers enabling Him He used the right powers; in offering Himself unto God He did the right thing.

In the Gospel story the willingness to make this consent is always the point of His challenge. He will take His disciples away

by Himself that He may speak more clearly and intimately about Himself and His mission, and when He does so He always insists upon one thing: they must understand Him as to His undertaking and the motive which inspired it. Again and again He reiterates the facts, "The Son of man must go unto Jerusalem." "He must be taken by the rulers and the scribes and the leaders of the people." "He must be killed. He must be scourged. He must be spat upon. He must be crucified. He must rise from the dead." He never allowed people to lose sight of the issues as they presented themselves to His mind. Even if He were uttering a parable like that of the good shepherd, He proclaimed His mission. "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep." Nobody was ever allowed to escape the fact, if they had any desire to become acquainted with the motive of His career,—the fact that He was anointed to be the Christ, that He was therefore anointed to die.

But that is only half the story. In establishing relations with people He always laid emphasis upon this fact as the primary thing in the full development of human life and of human destiny. "If any man will be my

disciple, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." Even when proclaiming His evangel, when uttering those most wonderful words which have appealed to the broken-hearted in all ages, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," He went on to say, "Take my yoke upon you. Come, shoulder My burden." The yoke, as we know, is that which binds two persons together, that two may share the load of one. And if you are weary and heavy laden, the load which is to be divided is not yours. There is a strange fact. Jesus does not say, "Come and let Me be your yokefellow, and carry your load." He says, "If you are broken-hearted, come and attach yourself to Me, and carry My load."

What was His load? It was love for other people. It was sacrifice, perhaps the shedding of tears and blood for others. But somehow or other it was always the bringing of joy, peace, and life to the other man. "Your soul shall be eased of its load, your weariness shall vanish as you seek to help Me bind up other broken-hearts." So when the rich young ruler came to Him and said, "Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" His reply was, "Go thy way,

sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, . . . take up the cross, and follow me. This is the way in which you are to go if you will enter into eternal life, come, help Me to carry the sorrow, the failure, the anguish of your fellow men."

People in those early days were very slow to appreciate this great truth, but up to a point they did appreciate it. We have seen the sort of victory Jesus had obtained. He had been with men, living with them, and teaching them until He came to where Peter said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." It was a great achievement. Immediately before this text and in connection with a prior incident,—that of the raising of Lazarus from the dead as we read in the Gospel of John—Martha came to Him and made a similar confession. Martha was not of the twelve, she represented the rank and file of discipleship; and as she saw Him facing death—the death which had fastened its terrible grip upon her beloved brother, the death which to her was overwhelming—she yet said to Him, "I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God."

Having an intellectual conviction, however, is different from having a faith. The calamity of the present day, as it applies to

our churches, is that we have a million people with conviction where we have very few with faith. Go into almost any of our orthodox Christian churches and challenge the multitude to rise and repeat the Apostles' Creed, and they will respond to a man, so far as their convictions or intellectual assent are concerned. They believe in God, in Christ, in the Holy Ghost, in the forgiveness of sins, in the resurrection of the dead and the life everlasting. But Jesus would never have won the world through an intellectual conviction; and to the fact of our Christianity being more mental than emotional in part is due the impotence of the Church to-day. Jesus knew that He would have failed if He got no further in His quest of the souls of men than was expressed in the confessions of Peter and of Martha. Hence it was that He had to wait for the moment when, somewhere in Palestine, among the people who had heard Him preach and seen Him labour, there should come forth one who, seeing that He had steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem, to be spat upon, to be scourged, and to die, should say, "Master, you are right. Go!"

This the disciples through their fears did not say. When after Peter's confession

that He was the Christ, the Son of the living God, Jesus announced to them that certain things must happen to Him, Peter forgot himself, came forward and clutching the garment of Jesus said, "Master, be that far from thee! Thou must not do a thing like that." Peter would not consent to it. And when Jesus started on the journey to Jerusalem there was this reluctance on the part of all His disciples to accept His view-point. He was lonely, for no one agreed with Him in His task. So it was when He went up into the Mount of Transfiguration to pray and took three men with Him, they fell asleep and left Him to pray alone. Again in Gethsemane the same three men left Him to grapple with His problem in solitude.

As they set out for Jerusalem Christ walked in front while His disciples lagged behind, apparently distrustful of each other and doubtful of the wisdom of their Master's course. At length, turning about, He said, "What is the matter?" And they revealed the fact that they were quarrelling as to which of them should be greatest when He came into His kingdom, the kingdom which they insisted on believing that He should restore to Israel, and which should be founded upon political power. Each was

hoping that he had such influence with Him that he would get the chief place.

Later on, while He still pursued His way, after He had taught them that He must be put to death, James and John, whose mother was with them, thought, like so many modern young men wanting preferment, that they might get it through "pull." Relying on her influence they proffered their request, "Grant unto us that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left hand, in thy glory."

In the face of all these misunderstandings of His great mission in the world, He had lived in the consciousness of the Cross, He had taught that the Cross was the way of life for Himself and for all who wanted to be like Him. And now He had set His face to go to Jerusalem. Already the shadow had fallen upon Him, and yet these people with all their convictions had not seen His soul. It was just then that sitting in this house in Bethany this woman came to Him—so modestly, so quietly, so humbly—and broke the box and poured out the ointment, and in so doing said, "You are right. I will give You up to die for other people."

And she was right. If you take up your New Testament and try to understand the

early expansion of Christianity the secret is always here. Take the life of the Apostle Paul, for instance. Read that passage in the Epistle to the Philippians, "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being gradually conformed unto his death." Or read again, "That I may fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ, for his body's sake, which is the church." Or again, "I am crucified with Christ." If ever you have a man who entering into that way shall say, "Master, lead on to Thy Calvary. I will follow in Thy footsteps, however haltingly and feebly. Thou art right to obey Thy God. It is right to obey Him. It is right to be clean, to suppress self, to devote oneself to the redemption of the race. It is right!" When you get a man like that, you get a Christian, and when you get a church that believes in Him after this fashion and practices such a belief, you get a church that suffers for love's sake and must therefore share in the triumph of her Lord.

Now I say that Mary was the first Christian. It took a long time for Simon Peter to become a Christian. He was Simon the Confessor before this, but Simon the Confessor could deny his Lord, and deny with

curses. After the resurrection, Simon the Confessor had gone away into Galilee and reflected upon his failure, and when he met the Christ again by the shore of the lake in the dawning, you remember what was the burden of the whole challenge of Christ. It was simply this: "Simon, son of Jonas, do you love me?" Not, "Do you believe in Me?" Not "Do you believe that I have risen from the dead?" Not, "Do you believe that I died on Calvary for the sin of the world?" But, "Simon, do you enter into such sympathy with Me that I can trust you in My task?"

There, to my mind, is the secret of our Christian life. I may reiterate, it is the secret of a man or woman espousing the Christ way, the Christ attitude; for the attitude which the Christ assumed, you remember, was the fulfillment of the vision of the past, "Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire. . . . In the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O God." If He had not delighted to do the will of God and work His works after the fashion of Calvary, He had never made the atoning sacrifice for you and for me. Do you consent to that in your own life, and realize what it means to be a Christian?

To be a Christian involves the repudiation of sin, the repudiation of the thing that necessitated His coming into the world, and caused Him to endure the Cross. But it involves very much more. If you are to be a Christian and enjoy the peace of which Christ spoke; if you are to know anything about the fulfilled joy that He made His benediction, you must understand that His first challenge is to the will, and you individually must be prepared to say, "O Will of God, I espouse thee, I would have thee done in the earth, even as thou art done in heaven. I would have thee done by me, I would have thee done in me."

A consecration to the will of God that is complete and absolute is the key to Christ and the key to the fulfillment of the eternal purpose. Have you made that surrender, with all that it involves? For it is the will to holiness. It is the will to self-suppression. Yea, it is the will to something vastly greater—the will to merge your interest, your property, your life, your business, in the interest and destiny of the other man. God loves the world through you, and the expression of His love demands always you! God loves you, but only because you are a part of the world, and Christianity

involves your recognition of the world, always the world!

Sometimes I hear most pitiful stories with reference to Christian churches, in which individuals, members of the Church, are insistent upon their own dignity and comfort, regardless of whether their brethren hear the Gospel or not. This is because church members of this type do not believe in themselves as part of a redeemed world. They think their God can be partial, that He can be a God Who has favourites; they do not think of Him as the great fountain of love and mercy Who so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son for it. They seem to think that God has seen them alone in the midst of a vast throng and has said, "You are My favourites, and when you come to heaven I will reserve a special suite of rooms or an apartment for you, into which other people will not be allowed to intrude." This attitude of soul is an affront to Christ.

The assent of my soul to the motive, method and work of Christ, then, enters into my every act, amusement, and indulgence; into the things I claim the right to taste and practice and do. It means that I am bound, before I am permitted to continue an act or

a habit, or before I may form new habits, to look into the faces of the multitude of weak people who have not the strength to do what is right, who are fettered by evil propensities and inherited tendencies, and to say, "For these Christ died; and therefore for these I die to my appetites and indulgences." This is what Paul taught. He says in that most striking passage in the sixth chapter of Romans, "Reckon yourselves to be dead men as regards sin, and living men as regards righteousness."

Have you made the choice, and made it out of love? If you hesitate let me beseech you that you go into the privacy of your room and think once more about the sure mercies of God. And so may I close by reiterating the appeal of the apostle, who wrote so majestically about this which I have tried so imperfectly to expound, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the sure mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."

V

THE REJECTED CHRIST

*Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify
your King? The chief priests answered,
We have no king but Caesar.*

—JOHN 19: 15.

“**S**HALL I crucify your King?” “We have no king but Cæsar.” Is anything on earth more terrible than a repudiated ideal, a repudiation which carries with it an abandoned ambition? All men who have sinned know how terrible is the moment after their fall, when they wake up to the fact of something lost, that moment which is followed immediately by the sense of something incurred. But perhaps the most terrible thing that happens whenever a man sins is the repudiation of his ideal, the abandonment of the eternal purpose of God, the deliberate turning away from the mountain heights to walk on some middle pathway through life, the surrender of his destiny.

Sometimes that repudiation applies to the

individual, sometimes to the family, and sometimes to the state. There is a passage which I never read without finding my emotions deeply stirred, in which the old prophet says that the "children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead the dough, to make cakes to the queen of heaven." It is the picture of the deliberate abandonment on the part of the father and the mother of the ideals which they had inherited from their parents, the surrender of the spiritual and the eternal, the abandonment of the government of God, in order that they might pursue the lower, the sensual, the animal, the material, and their deliberate election of a course of life involving a lower ideal, a different tendency, in which they involved their own boys and girls.

I suppose every pastor knows something of what is meant. Our neighbourhoods are being changed. The children of godly heritage are following after vanity and becoming vain, and their offspring are being denied the privilege of looking into the heavens. And that which one discovers in the family, one sometimes discovers in the individual life. So many men are like Esau, who repudiated the spiritual vision and the

eternal covenant, which his grandfather had won and which his father had inherited, for a moment of sensuous and animal delight. He surrendered their glorious gain of friendship with the Eternal God, and esteemed it as nothing worth compared with a savoury dish.

When you read the story of David, a story possessing so much that is grand and heroic, you are profoundly stirred when you come to the end of his days, and see the old man wistfully peering into the future, wishing that somehow or other it might be given to him to build a monument unto his God, Who had made him and guided him and delivered him, but conscious that a barrier existed, that the vision of the highest and best could not be realized, that it was forever denied him, because of the ideal he repudiated in his early manhood.

The story which I have chosen as the basis of our meditation in this chapter is the story of the rejected Christ,—the Christ rejected by the high priests, who were the custodians of the ideals and of the destiny of the people of God. “What shall I do unto your King? Shall I crucify your King?” The chief priests answer, “We are the children of Abraham; we are the heirs of the

covenant; we are they who were led out of Egypt by the mighty hand of God; we are they who have been taught and instructed by the prophet and the seer. All through these generations we have had godly men to intercede for us, and the Eternal Himself has come to us. But now we repudiate Him for Whom we have yearned and prayed, and we choose a Gentile for the throne of God!" Think of what it meant.

Any student of the Old Testament knows that when he reads the story of the Hebrew people he is reading something that is unique. In the midst of all their change and vicissitude, when they were baffled and harried and distressed, when they were carried away captives to Babylon, and when they sat by the watercourses in Babylon and were unable to sing their songs, there was always some one to rise in the name of the Lord, and prophesy of a better day, and in that way rekindle the hope with which they had started out on their early pilgrimage. Always some one would appear who would comfort the people of God and proclaim unto them restoration, and that the Lord would give unto them double for all their sin. Through all those generations they were continually dreaming of that

vision which was set forth in the second Psalm, of a King Who should come from the right hand of God, and Who should rule with a rod of iron, Who should break in pieces all who oppressed them, Who should release them from their bonds, and Who should set them in a mighty place in the midst of the nations of the earth. And though the vision tarried, they waited for it, and were often encouraged in their desolate condition by the story of One Who would be great, Who would come in majestic splendour, Who would beat down the oppressor, and Who would also be as a Saviour and Sustainer to those to whom He was sent, One Who would carry the lambs in His bosom, One Who would bear the people up in His arms, One Who would suffer for them and be smitten on their behalf.

That was the dream which persisted through generation after generation, through century after century, and I am always profoundly moved when I go back to the early chapters of the Gospels and see the picture that is presented to us there of men and women eighty and ninety years of age who, when the little Child was presented to them, lifted up holy hands in devotion, and cried

unto their Jehovah, "Now lettest thou thy servants depart in peace, according to thy word: for our eyes have seen thy salvation." And when Jesus had attained manhood, how tremendously moving to see the great crowds surging through the Judæan valley listening to the preaching of John, as with clarion notes he proclaims the coming of the acceptable year of God, declares the kingdom is at hand, and presents Him to them as a mighty warrior with His fan in His hand, Whose flail is in His hand, Whose sword is in His hand, Who is come to fulfill the work of God, Who is come to fulfill the dream of the ages. So the Christ embarked on His mission.

But even John could not understand the true inwardness of the movement, nor the spiritual significance of the promise of God, nor the place of the Israelitish people among the nations of the earth. John himself asked finally if He were the one Who should come or whether they should look for another. And Nicodemus, as the emissary of the Sanhedrin, came stealthily to Jesus in the darkness of the night, in order that he might talk to Him about the restoring of the kingdom unto Israel. All the way through those people had been filled with an intense

longing for the coming day of God, when the Lord Himself should come unto them as a King mighty in judgment and strong to bring salvation.

It is one thing to have a faith like that, and it is another thing to be prepared to accept the leadership of such an one as God shall send. In every generation men have laid primary emphasis upon social conditions. The attitude of the man outside the Church to-day, the attitude of multitudes of people inside the Church, is but the echo of that which has persisted through bygone generations. We still imagine that if you do but change the social environment of people, raise their conditions, make it easier for them to meet the emergencies of their own day, enable them to drive the wolf from the door, you open up avenues of development and experience which shall result in happy and noble living. That has been a persistent dream, and Jesus when He came was always tender and compassionate to the poor. How could He be otherwise than interested in them? He was born among them. To the end of His life He knew the extremities of poverty. From one point of view I think there is nothing more pitiful in the whole Gospel story than

that picture of Jesus and His disciples when the great multitudes were hanging about them, thousands of people with nothing to eat, and Jesus turning to His disciples, said, "How many loaves have you?" and the answer came back, "We have but seven little cakes." Thirteen strong men had had no other resource from which to refresh themselves when the labours of the day were ended! How poor He was! "Foxes have holes, the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head."

Not only did He understand it through experience, but everywhere when He confronted poverty He was ready for the emergency. He was always ready to relieve distress, always ready to speak comforting words to those who wept. And yet, though He did that, to the poor and to the rich alike, His message was ever the same: "The hope of the world lies in truth; the hope of the world lies in righteousness; the hope of the world lies in love. My kingdom is not political; My kingdom is not social. My kingdom has its foundations in character." That was His challenge, and because that seemed to be so impracticable, so intangible, first one and then another failed to appreciate it.

As I have said, it is one thing for people to have a conviction with reference to Christ and it is altogether another thing for them to have faith. It is one thing to give intellectual assent to Christianity and it is another thing to have a heart belief. It is the latter only that counts. There were many people in that day who had a certain intellectual conviction with reference to Christ. I suppose if you had asked him, Judas Iscariot had just as definite a belief in Christ as Simon Peter or Martha. He would have been prepared to say, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." And who was ever honoured as Judas Iscariot was honoured? Not chosen out, it may be, to go into the mountain when the Master went to pray, but always chosen as the almoner of the Lord's bounty. If ever Jesus would bless the poor, He would bless them through the hand of Judas Iscariot. And this man Judas dared to be a critic of one who would anoint the Christ to His burial, of one who would enter into whole-hearted sympathy with His cause and who had the courage to say, notwithstanding her breaking heart, "Thou art right, my Lord! Thou art right in devoting Thyself to the will of God! Thou art right in building

Thy kingdom upon righteousness and truth! Thou art right in surrendering Thy life to the common good! Thou art right in finding Thy destiny in the destiny of the world!" Because she dares to do that, to anoint Him to a destiny of that kind, Judas dares to say: "What a waste! Three hundred pence might have been given to the poor!"

"Judas! Judas, where have you been?"

"What is that to thee?"

"Where have you been?"

"I have been to Jerusalem."

"And what didst thou in Jerusalem? Didst thou go to bless the poor who hide in the shadows of its streets?"

"No; I went to the Temple."

"And didst thou go to the Temple that thou mightest make an offering unto God and mightest pray?"

"No; I went on a matter of business."

"And what didst thou make out of thy matter of business, Judas?"

"I made me thirty pieces of silver."

"And what didst thou sell, Judas?"

"I sold the person of my Lord!"

Oh, that frustrated ambition of a man who insists that his Lord must rule over the affairs of men with a sword, with a heel of

iron, a man whose one ambition is preferment, power, authority, dominion over the destinies of other people! "I sold Him! I sold the vision of His soul! I sold Him for thirty pieces of silver! I sold all that He dreamed of being and doing whilst upon this earth!"

And the same was possible with reference to Simon Peter. He could avow that this was the Christ, the Son of the living God; but the Christ he wanted must sit upon a throne in Jerusalem, and the Christ he followed must give him preferment when He came into His glory, and, falling short, he could deny Him with a curse! And Caiaphas, that vile-hearted man, that man of whom Jesus said to Pilate, "He who delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin," Caiaphas, being high priest that year, could utter a lie, an unholy lie, if thereby he might destroy this Man with His dream and His ambition of love.

Then it was that by their prejudice and by their passion and by their insistence upon the material, by their insistence upon a temporary triumph and upon a material kingdom, these men, the custodians of all the covenants and promises of God which have come down through the centuries and

which had sustained their fathers in the midst of sufferings and desolations which were inexpressible,—these men in one moment of passion surrendered the whole; and ever since then the Jew has had no king save Cæsar! Wherever he has gone, he has been the guest of the Gentile. All through the centuries, if he would know anything of the power of God and the promises unto Abraham, he must know it as a member of the human race and not as a descendant of Abraham. He has forfeited his covenant and it has passed to all mankind, and if ever he comes back, he has always himself to pay. It is easier for anybody to pass through the needle's eye into the kingdom of heaven than it is for a Jew. "We have no king save Cæsar." How awful the repudiation—ideal, ambition, destiny—in this confession!

My brethren, I want to apply this most tremendous fact to you. And I want to know, if I may, just what is your attitude towards the will of God and the kingdom, the purpose and the work of Christ? Are you still insisting upon it that Christianity shall be something that is altogether external to your own will? So many of us are still desiring that our Christ shall be a

social Christ, that our Christ shall express Himself in institutions, that our Christ shall be material in the expression of His power. We still resist Him when He comes into the innermost chambers of our being and says unto us: "My son, My daughter, give thy heart to Me. Give thy heart and thy life to what is true and pure and right and lovely." May I lay this heavy charge against you, my brethren? Is it easy for you to be kind? Is it easy for you to forget self and your own preferment and your own righteousness and your own comfort, as you realize the purpose of Christ for the other man? We who are in the Church know full well how very hard is the battle to be simply good.

Just in the same way we have a tendency in this present time still to make our Christ a creedal Christ, the Christ of the convictions and not the Christ of the affections. We are still insisting upon it that if we pronounce His name in a traditional fashion we are thereby initiated into the kingdom of God, and we are not prepared to say, as we ought to say,

"My Jesus, I love Thee, I know Thou art mine;
For Thee all the pleasures of sin I resign."

Have you rejected Him, and in His rejection have you started out upon a lower pathway—a lower pathway, my brother, for yourself and for your family? Some will read this who have come out of godly homes, boys and girls who are standing on the threshold of life, who are feeling the appeal of the world without, who are realizing the challenge that comes through opportunities for place and power, who imagine that a successful business career, a successful political career, a successful scientific career, is a big thing and a desirable thing, so big and so desirable that it must come first in their lives. Are you rejecting your father's Christ, the Christ of the spirit, the Christ of the vision, the Christ Who manifests the love of God, the Christ Who manifests the grace of God? Oh! young man, young woman, if you are doing that, I beseech you by the mercies of God that you be not as Esau, that person who elected to be just a common man, who threw open the portals of the sanctuary of his soul to the common thing. Have some place that is private; have some spot within your soul that is a sacred shrine. Give Christ the throne. Why reject Him?

Surely to-day every one of us, because of

the love He bears us, is ready and willing to repent, willing to change his mind, willing to change his attitude, willing to turn right around from the lower and sensuous and animal and the material unto the highest. We sometimes say that "Man must needs love the highest when he sees it." Yes; that is true, and I will not believe that any man or woman who reads this can reject the highest, when the highest is Christ. "Behold," says He, "I stand at the door and knock. If any man will open to Me the inner chamber of his being, if any man will surrender his will to Me, if any man will do the thing that I will, and the thing that I count more precious than My life, I will come in to him and will sup with him, and he with Me." Will you let Him in?

VI

THE CRUCIFIED CHRIST

Pilate saith unto them, What shall I do with Jesus which is called Christ? They all say unto him, Let him be crucified.—MATT. 27: 22.

WE are all aware of the dangers of familiarity. It is possible for us to become so accustomed to things that we cease to appreciate the living issues which lie behind. Every doctor of medicine is aware of the danger of becoming so much absorbed in the study of bacteriology, in the elucidation of the disease, its cause and its cure, that the people with whom he comes in contact are nothing more than cases! He does not feel the pang of quivering flesh and nerve. Indeed, I have known doctors to assert that sympathy is fatal to efficiency. The lawyer, in the interests of his vocation, becomes so absorbed in the cross-examination of witnesses, in the elucidation of facts, that he is altogether insensible to the anguish of the

soul that lies behind the blanched face of the person under cross-examination! He works on the theory that the unnerved witness is most likely to assist him in securing the verdict he desires,—And how often in connection with Christian truth do we find the theologian who is able to discuss nice points, to advocate theories, so vehemently, so passionately, that he forgets altogether that these are matters of the spirit! And so we see in the Church of Christ great cleavages between various sects and parties over what they are pleased to call theories of the Atonement, and the failure to appreciate the fact that it was a living Man, a young Man of thirty-three, who was “despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.” We must guard our hearts against such familiarity with the Gospel, and with Gospel truth, as shall destroy our capacity to appreciate the tragedy which lies behind the Atonement.

Let me reëmphasize the reserves of Christ. The fact that through the discipline of long years, through familiarity which He had with Holy Writ, through the intimacy of His relationship with God in prayer, through the confidence with which He encountered the circumstances of the com-

mon day, through the calm deliberation which characterized His anticipation of the ultimate issue of His career as the Christ, He had those reserves upon which He could draw, so that in the moment of His trial He did not fail. You and I encounter the circumstances of the new day without deliberation and without anticipation. We imagine that somehow we shall get through, that somehow at the end of the day we shall have suffered no hurt, or, if we have stumbled, and if we have fallen, a brief prayer to the Lord ere we lie down to sleep will be efficacious, and cleanse away all pollution which we have encountered. If we were to warn and watch ourselves, we would meet our daily circumstances differently, there would be brought to us a new revelation and vision, and every day would truly be a day's march nearer home.

I want to apply our thought to the great problem involved in the Crucifixion of Christ. I have shown that the problem which you and I have to encounter is one which could only be solved by man. It could not be solved by God. God could so love the world as to give His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

God could so anticipate the possible that there should be a Lamb "slain from the foundation of the world." But the work to be accomplished, if our human story was to be capable of rewriting, must be done by a real man, clothed in real flesh, possessed of a real mind, a real soul, and liable to real temptation. The whole problem of the Atonement lies in these elemental facts. He had to live under the discipline to which we are subjected. He had to take the risk which we have to encounter, and in the midst of our circumstances, with only our weapons in His hands, He had to live a sinless life, and He had to offer Himself a living sacrifice unto God.

The fact of Christ is the fact of sinlessness. Confronting just such circumstances as those which we face day by day, He encountered and overcame them, and, at the last, when He spread forth His hands upon the Cross, He spread them forth a spotless offering unto God. The problem which He had to face was a real one, and we must trace it step by step to see all that was involved in it. He had espoused the great task of devoting His life to the will of God; at all risks, at all costs, to obey God, and to find His delight in doing the will of God.

That was a supremely hazardous undertaking. It involved so much at the hands of men; it involved so much loneliness of soul; it involved misunderstanding, persecution, and abandonment.

And the first big fact concerning the Crucifixion of Jesus is His abandonment. He was "despised and rejected of men." His disciples, who had been with Him on the hilltop, on the lake, in the busy street, forsook Him and fled. The hierarchy rejected Him, and rather than tolerate Him chose that henceforth they should have no king but a Gentile. And the rabble rejected Him, saying they would rather have a guilty murderer than this Man. Apparently, for a moment He was lonely, because God had forsaken Him. As He went to Calvary He had no resources and no reserves but those that belonged to His manhood, and in the most dreadful hour of His experience He was so desolate that when He emerged from it you hear the one only bitter cry that ever came from His lips: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" He was the lonely Christ, and that was one of the elements in the price which He had to pay.

In addition to the loneliness which He must endure there was a tremendous trial

which was involved in His loyalty. It was not merely that He was rejected: He was actually despised and persecuted, made to suffer. And the loyalty which He espoused, and expressed, was not merely loyalty to truth, to an ideal or to a cause. It was vastly more. It was loyalty to an ambition, an ambition which disclosed itself in the manifestation of the love of God to perverse and wicked men.

How far will the love of God reach? The parables of Jesus imply that the love of God will reach far enough to cover everything in the way of sensual indulgence. You may waste your substance in riotous living, you may feed among the swine, and yet the love of God will reach you. In parable after parable, Jesus sought to win people to a conception of unshakable love, and in His contact with people during His ministry He evinced the same sort of compassion for those who had erred and gone astray. He met polluted women; He met harassed and distressed men. One was so vile through his past self-indulgence that he was not fit to live at home, a man who was not able to restrain himself; who could not be clothed; who was fit only to live in the mountains and in the tombs among the

wild dogs. Such people Jesus could meet. On the Cross He confronted a dying malefactor, a thief and perhaps a murderer, and brought to him the promise of a new experience and new relationships in the realm beyond the grave. He could touch all sorts of people in the ministry of each day, and He could express to each and all the love of God. When He encountered the problem of those who were the representatives of God; when the priest, the ruler, the recipients of His bounty, the Roman soldier, the people, had combined to crush Him, in that great prayer of His He still showed the invincible love of God. "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

Even after death itself had claimed Him, He went into hell and preached to those spirits that were in prison. The great and wonderful fact of the loyalty of Christ was involved in the effort which He made to demonstrate the mystery of the love of God which had been committed to Him as to a faithful steward. It also manifested itself in the wondrous love which as a man He expressed to God. He presented unto the Holy God the offering of a spotless character and an obedient will. The death which He endured was the offering of a

loyalty not only to truth, but loyalty to, the cause of declaring and manifesting the love that will not let men go, and evincing a love for God that no suffering could quench.

That was the story from the Christ's point of view, and yet it was not the whole story, for we must realize that He felt it all, that His soul craved for love and for human companionship as much as the soul of any human being that has ever walked the earth. When He came to the closing of His career, speaking still from the point of view of His own experience, the only people who had any insight into His character and His purpose were women. I wonder whether you have fully appreciated the place of women in the Gospel story, and the place of women in relationship to the cause of Christ. It was a woman who divined that the Christ must suffer, and who anointed Him and gave Him up to that great and august task. It was a Gentile woman, not a Jewess, a woman, and a woman alone, who said a good word for Jesus when the whole world was casting Him out,—it was Pilate's wife, who intervened and said, "Have thou nothing to do with that just man." Again it was a woman who was with Him first when He came back from the dead. It was a woman

who first welcomed the Gospel into Europe. Jesus it was Who stooped to touch women; Jesus it was Who lifted them up and gave them status in society; Jesus it was Who opened new worlds for the development of woman's character. And it was woman who first placed the diadem of humanity on the brow of Christ.

Apart from women He had no one to understand Him. His disciples had all forsaken Him and fled. So He met His death, a death that you cannot dwell upon, a death that you cannot speak about. He died that we might be forgiven. He died to make us good. The hazard was great; He took it and conquered.

But now there is one other thing that I want you to notice in the last hours of Christ. He, in all that He Himself had to endure, was still so resplendent in His holiness, and so utterly devoted to the will of God, that at the very end of His career He persisted in His ministry. The last days of Christ were not filled merely with the endurance of suffering, when He was led "as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep (that) before her shearers is dumb." While He was submissive to all that might come upon Himself, He was active to the end, in

His ministry of compassion. How He yearned for the traitor Judas! Look on that scene in the upper room at the Last Supper, a scene upon which I can never dwell without deep emotion. Have you ever pictured to yourself what was happening there? Those old pictures by the mediæval painters fail to help us to appreciate the scene. They have a table, and each man is sitting upright about it. But the thirteen men who were taking part in the Last Supper were not seated; they were reclining on divans, and each man was leaning to his left. So it was that in leaning to the left, John was leaning on the bosom of Jesus. But where was Jesus leaning? On the bosom of Judas Iscariot "who should betray him." Could He have done anything more than that? And He gave the token of brotherhood to Judas in the sop He handed him, and He let Judas know that his plot was discovered in such a manner that if the act of betrayal were persisted in it must produce a reaction in remorse such as would make life intolerable. Every act of Jesus was a warning and more than a warning—it was an appeal. Even when He met Judas in the Garden, instead of recoiling from him as from a foul viper, Jesus

called him "Friend." Oh, how He laboured for the soul of Judas! And the consciousness of it made death the only acquittal possible to the traitor.

Or take again that other scene of the association of Jesus with Pilate, and see how in all those interviews Jesus was not acquiescent and submissive, excepting in all things that related to Himself. All the way through those trial scenes He was forever solicitous about Pilate, giving Pilate his chance, excusing him here and there, and yearning and speaking to him about the kingdom and the truth.

And when at last the nails have torn His quivering flesh and He is altogether exhausted, and the heavens are shrouded in darkness and are as brass that cannot be penetrated, even then in His anguish, He talks to the dying thief and brings inexpressible peace to him. There is the majesty of your Christ and my Christ,—that all the time He must work the works of God. Not until He uttered that great cry "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit. It is finished,"—not until then did He cease to work.

Those who said they would have Him crucified, who rejected Him so completely,—

crying, "Let him be crucified!"—those people were doing more than hounding a good Man to His death. They were passing judgment upon themselves, by their attitude to holiness, by their attitude to the revelation of the kingdom as being within them; yea, passing judgment on every tradition of their fathers, every statement of their prophets and seers, repudiating the whole wealth and profit of vision and belief which men had acquired through long centuries of struggle. And in one great tragic hour they actually crucified themselves in that dread and awful sentence "His blood be on us, and on our children."

And so it is in our own passionate moments. We are judging ourselves, and in our response to the challenge of the great and wonderful things in life we express our own characters, our own estimate of ourselves. Do you ever face that side of things when you encounter the irritations of life? Do you ever pause to think, when you are tempted to lose your temper, that you are actually judging yourself? Do you ever stop to think that when you encounter the selfish things and the selfish suggestions of the common day and yield to them you are judging yourself? Our reaction to the

stress of our days is really a reaction which expresses and forms our character.

Now, in this quiet hour, what will you have us do with Jesus Who is called the Christ? Will you have us dethrone Him from His Saviourhood and turn Him into an ethical Teacher? Will you have us repudiate His blood and make Him into a social Reformer? What is your judgment of this Jesus Who is called the Christ? What is the estimate that you are forming with reference to the great problem that we must solve, the problem of our human failure, of our human sin and our human degradation?

It is the vital question to-day. We are forever losing ourselves in externalities. We do not realize that the virtue which is to restore our world is the virtue not of beautiful and gracious ministries, but of pure and holy and righteous purposes. If Jesus had not purposed the thing that was holy, His acts of kindness would have counted for nothing more than the inspiration of a sweet and lovely song.

If I have succeeded in helping you to see Jesus, the real Jesus, our Jesus, Who bore our sins and carried our sorrows and was touched with the feeling of our infirmities,

and Who was tempted in all points like as we are yet without sin, and therefore is able to succour those who are tempted, I beseech you to let Him into your life. And when you talk to Him, when you turn to Him in your affliction, your misery and your doubt, believe He understands you, because He has been through it all. Believe He is intimate with you, because it was for that purpose that He came into the world at all and so related Himself to each of the sons of men that they would, whenever they thought about Him, think "Here is my Friend, my Brother, my Saviour and my Lord."

VII

THE VINDICATED CHRIST

Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.—ACTS 2: 36.

HAVE you ever thought of the problems that are involved in the Resurrection of Jesus? Viewing His approach to death from the purely human view-point, realizing that Jesus was a real man, possessed of a real body, a real mind, a human soul,—the fact upon which the Atonement is built,—have you appreciated all that was involved in His dying and being laid in the grave?

We sometimes discuss the question of the Resurrection as though it depended upon the accuracy of the various texts of the New Testament; or we try to advance our various theories which may perchance help us to understand the mystery; or we attempt to explain it away, and to reconstruct the Christian system without it. We

talk about our visionary theories and about myths. But have you realized the problem which would have devolved upon you and me and everybody if Jesus had been left in the grave? Do you not see that there is involved the whole problem of Christianity, the question whether we ought to do right and not to do wrong, whether it is profitable to deny ourselves, and devote ourselves to the human cause? It is the biggest question you and I must face. If God had left Jesus in the grave! George Matheson, in one of those extraordinary intuitions whereby he was able to penetrate to the very heart of the problem, exclaimed: "There is no miracle in the Resurrection of Christ! There would have been a miracle if He had not risen." That would have been the most stupendous miracle of which the human race has ever heard.

For what would that have involved? Absolutely the triumph of the material. It would have demonstrated beyond doubt that the spiritual is of no value and probably does not exist at all. Think what would have happened to the world if all that had remained for a generation or two concerning Jesus our Saviour had been the feeling which was expressed by the two men walk-

ing down to Emmaus, "We trusted that it had been He Who should have redeemed Israel." If there had vanished from them the most wonderful Personality they had ever known, the one Man Who seemed to speak with authority and to possess the very power of God, Who had been invincible in the midst of all earth's sorrowing, crying and sin,—if He had been left in the grave, everything that these people had believed in and hoped for would have been condemned as foolishness. I think one of the most startling facts and, if Jesus had not risen from the dead, one of the most awful passages in the whole Bible, would have been that reference in the fifth chapter of the Book of the Revelation to the spirits of the martyrs crying out from beneath the throne, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood in them that dwell on the earth?" That great multitude of visionaries, of men and women who had believed in holy causes, who had believed that truth was more precious than life—if at the end all they could say about their sacrifice was that they had died for something not worth while, and that subsequent generations could turn their beliefs into subjects for jesting, it

would have shown that everything that we call goodness and loyalty and virtue in the world is not worth while.

All this is the fundamental truth involved in the Resurrection of Jesus. It is really primarily a question that involves God, whether there is a God or not. The demonstration of that depends entirely upon whether this world is built upon righteousness. It is not some product of our human minds; it is not some result of our reasoning. It does not depend upon the fact of your discovery that man is twofold, possessing a reason capable of expansion, and nerve centers in the brain susceptible of excitation. The ultimate demonstration of God is not back there in our philosophy. It is rather in the fact that somehow or other when men and women, seeing the beautiful, the true, the good, the perfect, devote themselves to it, they are dedicating themselves to that which is, after all, the basis upon which our universe is built. There is the fundamental fact.

Parallel with this is the value of virtue. It is not easy to demonstrate that a person is wise in being good. In the drama of Job the problem confronts us; and if allowed to stand by itself—if virtue were just as far as

man could attain and as high as he could aspire,—then the book ends in a tragedy. For how does it leave Job? If we pass a literary judgment, the author closes in limping fashion. He tells us Job had many children and many cattle, and became prosperous once more. Yet we know that even if that were true, the happy issue of events does not touch the soul of the man and woman who suffered and were bereaved. Think of this drama in relation to the sufferings and sorrow and tears of men to-day. You can never undo the fact that yonder godly parents, whose little ones are in the churchyard, have the memory of the sorrow and the bereavement of yesterday; that the prattle of other children and the blessing of their love which may be theirs to-day, do not remove the yearning for the sound of voices and the touch of hands that have vanished. If you have no hope concerning the past, if you cannot touch it, cannot explain it, you may justly ask, “After all, is it not wise to eat and drink, seeing that to-morrow we die?”

This problem, then, is one of God and one of goodness. Still considering Jesus from this view-point, what was it He accomplished in the task which He undertook in

becoming Christ? He came into this world to save sinners, living a human life, facing its hardships, being challenged by its circumstances, and in the midst of it all, consecrated Himself to the will of God at every hazard, at every risk, at whatever pain might fall upon His soul, walking on through a way that became more and more solitary, until at last He stands alone and desolate, apparently forsaken of God, really forsaken of man. He follows the path of His life so far in loyalty to God, in loyalty to truth, in loyalty to love. Then He dies at thirty-three, "despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." If that were the end of the story, then Jesus was unspeakably foolish. You see, then, the big problem involved in His being in the grave. Is this world purely material, and am I purely material? Or is the spiritual stronger and mightier than the material? The problem involves you and me, our whole present and our whole future.

How did Jesus come back from the dead? Paul says, "He was brought again from the dead by the spirit of holiness which was in him." That is the significant fact in Christ. In His devotion to goodness, to

righteousness, to the will of God at every hazard and every risk, He was devoted to that which was stronger than the bonds of death. Because of the spirit of holiness that was in Him, He was able to be a sacrifice unto God. Because of the spirit of holiness that was in Him, He could not be holden of death. Through the spirit of holiness that was in Him, He came forth from the grave, and in His emergence justified God, vindicating God as real and present, and was able to say to His disciples, "I ascend unto my Father and your Father; and to my God and your God." And in this is involved the whole problem of our travail, our tears, our bereavements, our death.

It is pitiful that so many people to-day must pin their belief with reference to what may lie after death either upon the speculations of the philosopher or upon the consideration of some of the results of what is called psychical research. After all, how can you speak positively with reference to the immortality of the soul, if you are dependent entirely upon the speculations of the human intellect? Have you ever noticed, for instance, how little of the Old Testament refers to the life after death? You can count the passages suggestive of

the future life in the whole of the Old Testament on the fingers of your two hands. Generally, in their promises to faith and virtue, the prophets and psalmists are saying the thing that is profitable for the life that now is. They had aspirations, they had hopes, but nothing more, and these were fragmentary and vague. If Christ had not come, and if His grave had not been emptied, I know not where we should have been. We certainly could not have built positively upon any theory of the immortality of the soul. And if you consider psychic research do you not see that it is built entirely upon the materialistic, that it is dependent entirely upon the function of the brain? The medium, capable of "psychic disturbance," must be seated in a dark room, and when her brain is excited she may be able to tell you that she sees some sort of a man, perhaps donned in a coat of mail, perhaps clad in some other garment. He tells about brick houses, or emanations from the earth that look like bricks, about suits made from decayed worsted, about smoking something that looks like cigars! You cannot build upon such a thing. If Christ be not risen from the dead we are of all men most miserable.

But the great fact which was vindicated in His coming from the dead is that the soul which is pure and righteous, and at one with God and given up to God, cannot be holden of death.

The way along which Christ trod is the way our human feet must go. We have to make the journey of the years, and we know the inevitable. It may come to us in tranquillity, it may come to us in anguish and tears—but come it will. Upon some it will come quite speedily, and the great problem confronting you and me as we journey towards the shadow land concerns the key that will unlock the door of death for us and reveal life to have been worth while and bring us the reward of our travail and our tears. Paul explains that if a man be in Christ he is a new creation; old things are passed away, and all things are become new. His relationship to goodness, to God, to life, is entirely different. And just because he is dead unto sin and alive unto God, he cannot be holden of death. “He that believeth in the Son of God hath life within himself.” That is what Christ means to a man or woman. Through our Lord Christ’s own experience you and I have the guarantee of what lies beyond.

It is absolutely imperative for us to realize that Jesus, when He entered this world, sent by God, given by God, came of His own volition, emptying Himself of His Godhead, taking upon Himself the form of a servant, being found in likeness of man, became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross, and so was crowned with glory and honour, that He by the grace of God might taste death for every man. Thus did He come into our human experience to unfold to us precisely what we are, according to the eternal purpose of the great God Who made us. That we have not that experience, and the certainty of that destiny, is due to our own wills, whereby we have separated ourselves from God; and when by an effort of our will we bring ourselves to Christ, and by the exercise of our judgment reckon ourselves to be already dead men and put into the grave with regard to the desire of sin, and by a surrender of our will reckon ourselves to belong to that life which cannot be holden of death, the life of Christ; when we surrender ourselves to Him in this absolute fashion, and in proportion as we do so, we have within us "Christ . . . the hope of glory."

We sometimes wonder in our individual

Christian experience why we know so little of the power of God and the full assurance of faith and hope. Most of the time it is due to the remoteness of our souls from the soul of Christ. Somehow we have allowed Him to go the way all by Himself, and whenever we think about Him we always do so with a personal apology. "He was Jesus Christ, and I am I," we say, when we ought to bring ourselves most humbly to Him and say, "Great Lord of my soul, there is a gulf between Thee and me, and I cannot span it. Wilt Thou come to my assistance? Where I am weak, wilt Thou display Thy majestic strength?" It is in proportion as we are willing to live the life, conforming ourselves to the obedience, entering into the experience, that we are able to say with the Apostle Paul, "I can do all things in Christ who strengtheneth me."

My message has been not only to the individual believer but also to the Church of Christ. I have already spoken about the unrecognized Christ. I feel that the failure to recognize Him is the peril of the Christian Church; that we have not yet awakened to the fact that we are severally members of the body of Christ, that our life is in association with Him, that we are the nerves,

the arteries, the bones, and the sinews of the eternal Christ; and that through the Church of to-day He reveals Himself to the whole world. The world judges Christ through you and me, and, if you will observe it, the world outside is not at all sure of Him. It will doff its hat to Jesus the Carpenter; it will not bend its knee to Jesus the Christ. It will speak about the labouring Man of Nazareth; it will not discuss the Sacrifice on Calvary. When a man like H. G. Wells writes about religion he says we are talking about a God Who is in the process of making, Who is very much like the Pauline Christ, but we are talking about something that has nothing to do with the Cross. The world does not understand Him, because it does not see the majesty of sacrifice in the Church, which is His body.

There is our failure in this present day. My friends, shall we not in our individual lives, and through our association with the Church of God, seek to approach more nearly unto Him Who is our hope, our peace, and our crown of righteousness?

You will notice what Peter has to say in our text, and the words are manifestly inspired, for they are like those big utterances of the prophets that burst from their souls,—

words quick and powerful which they do not appear fully to understand in all their significance at the moment of utterance but which are pregnant with eternal truth. Here is the tremendous phrase, "This Jesus whom ye crucified, God hath brought again from the dead, and hath exalted and declared to be Lord of our human race, and Christ, anointed to set men free."

But a great deal more than this men gradually came to see in Him as they tried to spell out the secret of their experience of the power of God; and before a generation passed they were talking about the grace of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and realizing that He belonged to God, that He was God, and that the way by which they were able to penetrate that great and awful mystery of the Godhead and the eternal purpose was the way of the "Man of Sorrows, who was acquainted with grief," the Man Who was "despised and rejected of men," but Who lived in loyalty to God, Who died in loyalty to God and truth and love, and through the spirit of holiness that was in Him could not be holden of death.

May the Lord grant unto you, my brethren, this conviction of eternal life! May you be aware of its fullness and its power,

and as you confront your own vicissitudes, as you face the dark shadows that will sometimes cross the portal of your home, as you face the inevitable issue of your own lives, may you go forward calmly, serenely, confidently, knowing that your path is onward into the light, and that when at last you are away from home in the body, you are at home with the Lord!

VIII

LACKING IS WHAT?

What lack I yet?—MATT. 19: 20.

One thing thou lackest.—MARK 10: 21.

I HAVE been asked if to-night I would address my remarks particularly to young men and women, who for some reason or other have found it difficult to accept Jesus Christ as their Saviour. We of to-day are not able to preach the Gospel quite as simply as were our fathers. To them the world was much smaller than it is to us, both the world of thought and the world of men. They knew practically nothing about the people living in Asia or the people living in Africa. Still less did they know anything of ethnic religion. Their world was a very small world, their ideas of right and wrong were quite definite, the relationship of people to Jesus Christ was precisely stated, hence it was quite possible and easy for the preacher to propound what he called the plan of salvation, and the people

had either to accept or refuse it. But to-day so many young folk have been to school and college, and have become acquainted with all sorts of books and ideas with reference to God and man, that it is not quite so easy for them to understand the one supreme claim of Jesus Christ. They are prepared to give Him a place among other great leaders, to give His religion a place among the other religions; but to say that Jesus Christ alone can save the soul of a man, that every man and every woman must come to Jesus Christ and make a definite surrender to Him now,—that does not appear to them to be quite so easy. Therefore I want to discuss this matter with them simply and sympathetically and as one who has some understanding of their case.

I have chosen as the basis of what I am going to say the narrative of the rich young ruler, and particularly do I want to put together two clauses which are to be found in the narrative as it is recorded by Matthew and Mark: "What lack I yet?" "One thing thou lackest." Here are two young men looking into each other's eyes. They are of about the same age. They have been reared in the same district. They have been brought up in the same religious faith.

They have been reading the same Bible. But in other respects they are vastly different. The one man is an aristocrat; the other a peasant. The one man is of ancient lineage, of which he is proud. He has inherited a vast fortune, and he has accumulated more and more since he came to manhood's estate. The other is so poor that He has to say, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." The contrast is absolute. Here is the rich man, and there is the poor man. Here is the aristocrat, and there is the peasant. And yet, although the difference is so wide between them in social rank and antecedent training, here is the aristocrat saying to the peasant, "Good Master,"—recognizing that this poor man knows something which he does not know, that this poor man is possessed of a secret which he has not been able to discover, that somehow or other in the breast of the Galilean peasant there is a secret of peace, of power, of hope and of friendship with God which he has not been able to discover, notwithstanding his purity of life, his education, all his advantages of birth and training. The rich man bends before the poor man and says: "Master, tell

the secret of your life. What good thing shall I do that I may inherit eternal life? What lack I yet?"

Now all that is a most startling thing in itself. I suppose every young man and every young woman here, whether Christian or not, would be prepared to admit that, as far as they have been able to read, and as far as they know the world of men and the story of the past, the Jews stand supreme in human history for their knowledge of God and for their probity of character and for their purity of life. We are all prepared to admit that it is a great and blessed thing to be a Jew. Jesus of Nazareth was born a Jew, lived a Jew, died a Jew. If I were as good as this Jew, if I went to church every Sabbath day, if I read my Bible every day of the week, if I were able to look into the eyes of the spotless Son of God and to say, "I have never committed an impure act; I have never cheated; I have never told a lie; I was never ungrateful to my parents"—if I could say all that to the spotless Son of God, if I could say to Him, "I have lived a fair, clean life ever since I was born," what could be asked of me more than that? What else do you demand of people? We often say among ourselves,

“ There’s heaps of good in the worst of us,
There’s lots of bad in the best of us :
And it ill becomes any of us
To say aught wrong about the rest of us.”

We are given to the use of cheap sentiment of that kind. And when we look into the ranks of those who are church members and then look at those who are not members of the Church we oftentimes do not see much to choose between them. We say that it is the life that counts. If a man is clean, honest and respectable you have no right to demand anything more. Yet here is a man who has all the elements of a great and splendid character, a noble representative of the highest religion the world has ever known, and nevertheless he is found confessing for himself, and confessing for those to whom he belongs, that somehow or other he was not at peace, that somehow or other something was wrong; he was conscious of a lack, a lack he had not discovered in Jesus.

Well now, look for a moment at another very remarkable man whose story you have perhaps read. I suppose that you would all agree with me in saying that apart from Jesus Christ perhaps the greatest human being who ever trod this earth was Mohammed. What a wonderful thing that

man did! Have you ever allowed your imagination to be aroused by his story? If you were to stand at Mecca and make a double crescent; one sweeping away from Mecca to the northeast, passing through Babylon, Nineveh, Persia, with their glorious civilizations of the past, on into Hindustan; the other sweeping away to the southwest, passing through Egypt, through Algiers, into Spain, the two crescents embracing all the glory of our ancient human story, western and eastern alike. Then, when you have done that, imagine this simple, obscure man of Arabia, not merely taking all those tribes of Arabia, which had never been united, which no human warrior or statesman had ever been able to weld together, but making them a compact whole, and within seventy years of the founding of his faith becoming the one and only personality dominating all that world, east and west. There never was such a conquest. There never was such a man as Mohammed. And the secret of his story is told quite simply for you. When plodding his way across the Arabian desert, trying to seek what little shelter might be available from the shadow of the camel by whose side he was walking, this great and solemn truth

was revealed to him, that God is one! One, and yet as near to him as the main artery of his neck! That was the faith that transformed the appearance of the world. Yet Mohammed knew that he had failed to discover the secret, and he died without discovering the secret. He knew that there was something wrong, something he had not attained; and every one who has come into contact with the Mohammedan world knows to-day that somehow or other Mohammedanism breaks down. It cannot touch the human soul; it cannot lift the human home; it cannot bring peace and joy to any one.

There was a friend of mine who became a missionary in Tangier. Coming back to England on a furlough, he told me this story. Sitting on the veranda of his house in Tangier one day he saw a poor, weary, gaunt, travel-stained man from the desert, coming towards him. When the man drew near to him, this is what he said: "I have travelled five hundred miles on foot, I have walked for three months, begging as I went, oftentimes without food, oftentimes almost dying of thirst. I have come to Tangier, and I have come to you to know if you can tell me the way to God." That is the pitiful thing about Mohammedanism, that though

the great preacher somehow felt God, was as near as the main artery of his neck,—a God Who was kind and pitiful and of tender mercy, slow to wrath, ready to forgive—such a God was undiscovered by him.

Another great and remarkable man who lived in the eastern land was that person whom we know as Buddha. Some of you have read "The Light of Asia." You know what Sir Edwin Arnold had to say there, and I suppose you would agree in saying you have perhaps never read anything more appealing than that story told so exquisitely by Arnold of the poor woman who had been bereaved of her little child, and who had gone to the great saint and mystic in the solitudes in which he dwelt, and had besought him to come to her rescue and give her back her child. And the great saint said, "Go out into the world of men and find a home in which there is no sorrow, and then come back and repeat your request." After long wandering the woman came back and when the saint met her, she did not repeat her request. She said: "I have wandered everywhere, but I have never found a home with less sorrow than my own. I want not my little child again. I want peace, and the power to sympathize." And there is

something in that great faith which is very wonderful and very appealing to us as we read it and try to be sympathetic towards it. But we all know that it is full of gloom. It has no hope in it. Its one ambition is to forget, to sink into utter and eternal oblivion. We all know that it is devoid of that great altruistic love which is the note of the Gospel. Buddhism leaves a great lack.

Well now, suppose we turn our attention from these great men of the Eastern world to look at one last figure out of that great and wonderful past to which one likes to appeal now and then. If you think of the Græco-Roman world, what wonderful persons are there! One of my favourite characters from that wonderful world is Epictetus. Have you read anything that he wrote? Whenever I need to have some iron put into my blood, I go back to my Epictetus. Oh, I love to hear that old man, who is great and immortal notwithstanding his bonds, say to the tyrant who would hush him into silence: "What would you? You would cripple me, would you? And you would break my leg, or break my arm, would you? You would take my sight, would you? You would cut out my tongue, would

you? Then cut it out. You cannot touch me." I like that. I would God that every young man and every young woman in this service to-night had just that same moral fortitude. "You cannot touch me!" And that old man said: "You want to make me a common man, do you? You want to make me just like one of the twenty thousand threads that go to make up the Roman garment? Well, I prefer to be the little coloured thread around the hem, which shows I am not common." That is magnificent, and yet if you read what that great and wonderful man had to say, and what those to whom he belonged had to say, you know that if any people were stretching out pitiful hands towards one who was greater than themselves it was the people of the day of Epictetus.

Wherever you look in the world, you meet this one great and extraordinary fact that, however much people have discovered concerning God, there is still a sense within themselves that they have failed. They lack some secret thing whereby their lives may be really sublime. Now here we have a picture over against that of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, and in making my appeal and in leading to my conclusion I want for the

moment to put on one side all argument that might be based upon a definition of His divinity. Just now I want you to look at Him as a man. I want you to see a man of thirty looking into the face of a man of thirty, a man who was a peasant, a man whose days were spent in manual toil, a man who had nothing with which to commend Himself to other people, a man who was without form or comeliness, and who had no beauty that men should desire Him. And yet, wherever He went He possessed some extraordinary power which convinced men that God was real, that God was near, that peace was a reality and joy was a blessed experience, and hope was invincible. That was the strange thing about Him. Wherever He went people came to Him. They were so sure of Him, He was so strong in soul. We only know from our reading of this book something of what He said and did on some forty days of His life. No more! If you were to take your Gospels and divide them up according to days, you only know something of what He said and something of what He did on forty separate days. And yet, what do you know? You know this: that if He were to go into a strange district, into a strange city, and if

there were in that district a young man, who, because of his sin, his fleshly abominable sin, had got to the point where he was unbalanced, where his father and his mother had had to put him out of the house and close the door, where he could only sleep in the tombs and fight for a living with the mad starving dogs,—if He went there, the man came to Him, and soon the man was clothed and in his right mind, and that same poor, despised man would become the evangelist of a new day.

And you know that if He went into a city and in the gathering twilight as the fishermen were going down to spend their night, the still, dark night upon the waters, He stood there on the outside stairway of a little cottage and lifted up His voice and said, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." And His voice brought comfort and joy to them and turned their labour into worship. If, away down yonder in the winding street, beneath the dark shadow that was cast by a house, there was the lurking form of a girl who had been tripped up as she went along life's way, doomed henceforth to walk in the shadows, there was something about this young man and His

message that won her back to hope and purity of life. And the great and wonderful thing about Him in that day was that just because of what He was, just because of what He knew, just because of the peace and the joy that were His own possession, all sorts of people went to Him and found Him; people good and evil, rich and poor, clean and unclean. All found that in this man there was something that they lacked.

Now that is precisely what people are finding to-day. A little while ago in Chicago, I noticed in my congregation a young English girl. A little while later there came a man with her to church, a man who was very shabbily dressed, but who had a fine presence. They came every Sunday night for months. At last one night I had a 'phone call. It was from this young girl. "Please, Dr. Gardner, will you come to see me, and come now?" And when I went to see that girl, I found her living with this man in a little, dirty, sordid room. He was half drunk, and she was sitting there with her hair down her back and her eyes streaming tears, and she said, "O Dr. Gardner, I am glad you have come, now that I have got the courage to tell you." This was what she had to say. She showed

me portraits of herself as a bright young English girl, living in a beautiful home, having her pets about her. She showed me portraits of herself as a young London actress, winning fame upon the stage. And then there came the story of a trip to Canada, of misunderstanding and misadventure, and at last entering a travelling company, being associated with this man, he professing that she had some influence over him, and being persuaded to let herself be called his wife, living together, drifting from city to city for three years—and there they were in sordidness and misery, in sin and degradation.

What would you have done if you had been called to see a woman like that,—hopeless, helpless, just waking up to the fact that there was a purity which had vanished, that there was a peace that was gone forever? It was in such circumstances that I could turn to the Book and tell this same story of this same person, and when I was starting for my holiday a fortnight ago, after the Sunday evening service, just as I was going to bed, my 'phone rang and this young woman wanted to tell me something before I left home. "Doctor, you are going away, and possibly before you come back I

shall have gone. I want you to know that your ministry has not been in vain. It can never be the same again with me as it was before I sent for you." That is the power of Christ. Somehow He has the great secret. He can tell us how to supply that which is lacking.

Now what is it that Jesus can do? Let me in a sentence or two try to put it before you. What was Christ's secret? Have you heard the story of Robert Moffat, the great missionary to Africa? You know how as a young man he went among those dark-skinned folks and preached and preached and laboured decade after decade without result, and yet kept on preaching and labouring until the results came. Robert Moffat said this, "The biggest word in all the world, the biggest word in the Bible, the secret of Jesus Christ, lay in this simple little word—namely, *my*." Hundreds of years before Christ, the psalmist had been telling us, "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him." It was a simile and nothing more. "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you." A simile and nothing more. But Jesus said, "*My* Father," and it changed the world. *My*, mine, mine!

Do you know that? And just because He had a Father, knew God as His Father, knew Himself engaged in the work of His Father, He had peace and power. He entered sympathetically into the Father's cause and He became the Saviour. This was what He would have the young ruler know and share. He would have him say to God, "My Father," and He would have him come to seek and save the lost, for no one can understand the Father, no one can dwell with the Father, without somehow or other finding and developing within himself the Saviour heart. That is the wonderful thing, the secret Jesus imparts to men.

One of my fellow students went as a missionary to New Guinea, and he came back after some years of service. The last period of his service was in what is called the Fly River region, where James Chalmers, the great missionary, was murdered. When Chalmers was murdered, my friend went to take his place. He came back, and he came to see me. I had a long talk with him, and I said, "Tell me what you found at your station in New Guinea." "Found! I found something that looked more hopeless than if I had been sent into the jungle to a lot of tigers."

“What do you mean?”

“Why, those people were so degraded that they seemed utterly devoid of moral sense. They were worse than beasts. If a mother were carrying her little baby, and the baby began to cry, she would throw it into the ditch and let it die. If a man saw his father break his leg, he would leave him upon the roadside to die. They had no compassion whatever. They did not know what it meant.”

“Well, what did you do for people like that? Did you preach to them?”

“Preach! No, I lived!”

“Lived? How did you live?”

“When I saw a forsaken baby crying, I comforted it. When I saw a man with a broken leg, I mended it. When I saw people in distress, I took them in and pitied them. I took care of them. I lived that way. And those people began to come to me and say: ‘What does this mean? What are you doing this for?’ Then I had my chance and I preached the Gospel.”

“Did you succeed?”

“When I left, I left a church.”

You cannot understand the Father, you cannot belong to the Father unless you get the Saviour heart.

Now here is a great and wonderful thing about Jesus Christ. He possessed that so perfectly that when the Bible tried to explain it the Bible said this about Him: He was the Lamb, slain from the foundation of the world. He was so absolutely one with God that when you would understand the heart of the Father you must understand the heart of the One Who from the foundation of the world was Saviour. And Jesus Christ expressed the Saviourhood. He came to seek and to save that which the Father sought and saved. He was, if you like to have it so, the Arm of God, rescuing the perishing from the awful gulf of despair, sin, misery and guilt. That is the wonder of Him.

When this young ruler came to speak to Jesus, Jesus looked at him and loved him, and He said unto him: "Oh, come and be My brother. Forsake all that you have, your wealth, your tradition, your lineage, forsake it all and come, follow Me." And he went back, for he could not do that. He was rich, and he could not pay the price of his quest. He was not reconciled to his Father in such wise that his Father's Spirit could come into him.

Let me put this matter to you in a very

definite and personal way. Did you ever read that story of George Eliot's called "Romola"? If so, you will remember the story of Tito Melema, the young man who came to Florence with a little packet of precious gems which had been entrusted to him in order that he might purchase the ransom of the old man who was his own foster father, and you remember how, lying there, he opened the package and allowed those little jewels to fall through his fingers, and he bethought him that the old man was very old and he was young and had life in front of him, and if he were to take those jewels and use them for himself he might purchase fame and pleasure and all the things that a young man likes to enjoy. He did the thing that was unspeakable, and later won the love of Romola, and went to seek her hand from her poor blind father, and the poor blind father asked concerning his possessions, and he presented this little package. As the old blind man opened the package with his trembling fingers and began to feel those same gems, he said: "Why, these are precious gems. These are a man's ransom!" So they were, a man's ransom! And he was spending them upon himself for pleasure, for fame, for dis-

tion, for human love. A man's ransom! And here are young people listening to me this night, the possessors of things more precious than gems, possessors of reason, possessors of conscience, possessors of sympathy, possessors of love, possessors of power of sacrifice. Oh, this wonderful personality of yours. It is a man's ransom. If you did but know it, your day and opportunity are golden and the Lord is calling for you, bidding you rise and follow Him, that along with Him you may win the world to goodness, truth, purity, hope and life. Christ calls for this.

What art thou saying to Christ? "O Jesus, great and wonderful, go Thy way. I want to enjoy the world. I want to taste the life that is lower. I want to follow my lesser self. I want to taste the fruit of my own physical impulse. Go!" Is that how you speak to Him? I could not speak like that. He drew me, and I followed on, charmed to confess the Voice Divine. I come to you from a great city, a city with sin and sorrow. I come to you from a parish that is crying for pity. Oh, it is glorious to live in a vast metropolis if you have the love of Christ in your heart, if you feel you have something for the great mass,

something that will lift, something that will save. It is the uniqueness of Christ that He can be immediately presented to all sorts and conditions of men, to all nations, tribes, and tongues. While attempts have been made to familiarize the western world with Buddhism, the whole idea of that faith has had to be recast in order to make it intelligible. But men are going everywhere preaching Christ, and their message is being demonstrated as the power of God. It is a message of love, and love is a key to the universal heart of man.

Young folk, you cannot do better than to follow Jesus. I give you the challenge:

“Follow the Christ the King,
Live pure, speak true, right wrong;
Follow the King.”

Will you?

IX

THE STRONG MAN'S GLORYING

*God forbid that I should glory, save
in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

—GAL. 6: 14.

WHAT must these words have meant to the man who wrote them? The experience implied in them had not been easily attained. The cross was an invention of the Roman, but the Roman hated the thing that he had created. He recoiled from his own handiwork with disgust and horror. He never dreamed of putting a Roman citizen on a cross, however base, however despicable, however hardened a criminal he might be. The Greek who always regarded the Roman as his intellectual inferior, heaped nothing but supercilious scorn upon one who, notwithstanding his military prowess and his great practicality of mind, could yet invent so degrading and so awful a means of torture as a cross. The Jew felt that in speak-

ing about the cross he was referring to that which filled his cup with bitterness and with gall. It was humiliating enough for him in his pride of ancestry, in his recollection of the distinction which came to him from Abraham his father, to think that the proud and scornful Roman could have raised his scepter in the midst of the city of God, but to know that he had deemed it worth his while not merely to put slaves upon a cross, but also to take the children of Abraham and nail them upon a cross, that was awful! And when the Apostle Paul heard the story of Jesus of Nazareth, and heard men who professed to belong to Him affirm that having been nailed on the cross demonstrated that Jesus was the Christ through Whose blood men have remission of sin, he was filled with such bitterness and vehemency of hate that, as he went towards Damascus, he was "Breathing out threatenings and slaughter." So vehement was his hate that his very nostrils were dilated, as the nostrils of a horse dilate when it rushes onto the battlefield! And yet this man who had felt the disgrace heaped upon his nation in such wise as I have described, now dares to stand in the presence of those criticizing him, those who would put the Cross to one side

in the Christian Church and aver, "I have suffered the loss of all things, and I count them but dung, that I may win Christ, . . . that I may know him." "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of . . . Christ." "I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified."

Now, for a Jew to come to a position of that kind, something most remarkable must have happened in his own life. He must have made a discovery. I want to think about that discovery this evening. It is obviously impossible for one in the course of a brief half hour to deal with every aspect of this subject. I want to present to you just one or two views of this matter which are to be discovered in the writings of this man, and also in the writings of his friends. First of all, the Cross became the object of glory to him because in and by it he had discovered the key to the heart of God. You remember that great and remarkable word, "God commendeth his love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." What is God? What is the relationship which God holds to the children of men? That is the age-long question. That is the great and tremendously im-

portant question to every serious-minded person. And it was particularly so to this man. He had been born into a faith which was in itself distinguished. He had learned from the Psalmist to speak something like this: "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained; what is man?" He had felt, when he had come to think about God, the great, mighty, august majesty of the skies, that he was altogether insignificant. And that thought has been burned into the minds of many good and many devout men since then. You remember how Milton himself puts it:

"These are Thy glorious works, Parent of good,
Thine this universal frame, thus wondrous fair,
Thyself how wondrous then! Unspeakable!
In Whom all this magnificence is lost."

And many a man, many a religious man, has come to a view of God such as this. But a God of this kind is after all tremendously distant. He is so mighty; He is so majestic; and for you and me, just because of what we learn from the modern scientist, a God of this kind becomes more and more a retreating God. We cannot so much as touch the fringe of His garment,

He is so great. In his early struggle Paul had been overwhelmed at the thought of the majesty of God.

But there is another view which this man had also had of God. He had discovered not merely One Who was magnificent in His handiwork, but One Who was awful in His judgments. He had learned that he himself was not merely intellectual; he was moral also, lived in a moral world, and was subjected to moral laws. When he thought about the justice that pervades all life, about those inexorable moral laws of God which track us down like Nemesis, it was then that he was filled with something more than amazement at the august majesty. He was filled with horror at his own impotence. "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight." Such was the faith in which he had been reared, and that faith became tremendously significant. You remember his agonized cry, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" You know how significant this view of God has become to many people to-day.

You remember, for instance, how Thomas Carlyle in "Past and Present" speaks about justice and judgment: "I tell thee, O man,

that in this God's world, there is one great, invincible, absolute thing, and that is the just thing. I tell thee that if thou hadst all the artillery of Woolwich trundling at thy back in support of an unjust thing and infinite bonfires waiting a long way ahead of thee to celebrate thy triumph, I would yet advise thee in God's name to fling down thy baton and cry Halt! For in a few years thou wilt be all cold, eyeless, deaf. What then will thy success amount to? Nothing!"

And just as these modern men have felt the inexorableness of justice, so this ancient man felt it. He dreaded to stand before One Who was just. You know how sometimes we ourselves sing:

"Before Jehovah's awful throne,
Ye nations, bow with sacred joy:
Know that the Lord is God alone:
He can create, and He destroy!"

Yes, He can create and He destroy. And this man, feeling it, was filled with horror at the thought of it, and the one great consuming passion of his life was to know, What is the heart of God? And it was there that Christ met him, and it was there that the Cross became luminous to his astonished gaze, and it was because, as he pondered

upon it, he discovered in it and through it some message concerning the Eternal—it was what the Cross helped him to understand about God that made him glory in it.

Now, the Cross did not create the love of God. It revealed it. The love of God was not something that sprang forth because Jesus died in agony. Jesus died in agony because "God so loved the world." I remember when I was a little boy living in a small town on the borders of Lancashire and Cumberland how sometimes the preachers would come and describe to us what they believed to be the Gospel. It was by such descriptions that I myself became a Christian. And yet now I can think of some of the images they employed only with something of horror. I remember one good, faithful man talking to us like this: There was the poor trembling sinner hanging over the awful abyss, held up by a single thread. The sword of Divine justice was unsheathed and ready to sever that which held the man and precipitate him into an awful hell, when suddenly a voice from behind cried, "Father, spare him!" and because of that cry the sinner was rescued. I remember all that, and it was that sort of thing that led to my conversion. Yet I know that it was not

true, and as I come to read my Bible I find that when men are speaking about wrath, the wrath that waits for sinners, the greatest and most awful word relating to the solemn fact is that the eyes of the Lamb upon the throne flashed with wrath. There is no conflict between Jesus and God. They are alike in wrath; they are alike in mercy; and it was because through the Cross this man touched the heart of God that he gloried in it.

But there is more in the Cross than that. It was by this same Cross that this man and those who shared his faith came to scale the possibilities of man. "It became him," says one, "it became him, . . . in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through suffering." And this man says that he goes on to apprehend that for which he was apprehended of God in Christ Jesus. And that which he is reaching towards and hopes to attain he expresses in most extreme terms. He dilates on our being "filled with all the fullness of God," on all of us attaining unto the "measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." Why, it is extraordinary. Did you ever open your Bible at the Epistle to the Ephesians and read that first chapter?

You notice how the first portion of that Epistle bursts forth into that great song of adoration, because of the riches of God, the great and ineffable riches of God, that belong to you and belong to me. No man can define them; no man can weigh them; no man can limit them. They are mine! That is wonderful. But this is more wonderful, that I should be God's riches. Why, a man with my passions, with all my weaknesses, with all my follies, with all my sins, with all my prejudices,—that the Infinite God, Who is surrounded with the serried ranks of the angelic hosts who adore Him and serve Him day and night without ceasing should account Himself poor until He has got me. That is astonishing to me. "Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price." "Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, . . . but with the precious blood of Christ."

The revelation that came to Paul was something like this: The great, the infinite God had been dreaming, working, planning for countless ages. He began away back yonder—I do not know when—but He began to dream. He would make a world, He would make an order of beings in His own image, in His own likeness, who should

share His thoughts and participate in His Spirit, the spirit of self-giving love, and towards it He was working in all the past of the universe. That was His dream. But His dream was broken and sin and perversity came. He could not be robbed of His dream, however, and therefore He gave His Son. In giving His Son He put all He had into the realization of His purpose. He had got to realize His dream. You know how men to-day will take all of their material possessions,—some man in New York, or Chicago, or Pittsburgh to-night has seen a vision of material glory, something he accounts most precious, and he is already beginning to liquidate all he has in order that he may realize it. He will even mortgage his automobile or his piano. He will mortgage everything that he may possess. He is going into that thing out of which some material good is coming to him. You have seen a farmer in the spring time, when the ground is all bare and cold and fruitless, and you have seen how he will take all he has of thought and wisdom and energy and wealth and put it into that brown, barren earth. And after he has done it the long weeks will pass, and he will come back to the gate of his field again and again. As

he looks out across the brown earth, his eyes will be filled with the luster of hope concerning the coming glorious harvest. You have seen the artist as he spreads his canvas and prepares his pigment and is ready for his task, for a vision has come to his astonished soul, and he will now delineate some fair and wonderful symbol of the vision that will teach and inspire and illumine the souls of men forever. God Almighty, having greater work than this to perform, beggars Himself. What does God desire? Why was it that in Christ He counted not His Godhead a thing to be clung to but beggared Himself? It was that Christ may be born in you and me. He, Paul, was one day to attain to the full grown manhood of Christ, to have the mind of Christ, to have Christ found in himself. That was what made this man glory in the Cross of Christ.

And yet, that is not all. Paul came to see a great deal more than that. He saw by this Cross the measure of the Divine commandment for him. "Christ . . . became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." There is a great and startling fact. May I put it to you in this form? I do it with the utmost reverence, and only

that we may relate ourselves to the Apostle's argument. Jesus Christ in going to Calvary, having taken upon Him the likeness of men, was no better than He ought to have been. He did not do more than He ought to have done. You could not imagine Him in the world, challenged as He was, facing the awful call which came to Him, and yet failing to do the thing that He did. The law of God for Christ demanded that He should do and be and bear just what He did. We dare not think of what would have happened had our Lord failed to do the will of the Father when the Cross loomed in sight. Try to get some poet to write an epic concerning some man who embarked upon a great adventure, strange and awful, but who, in the moment of his soul's crisis, failed. It cannot be. Try to get a novelist to tell the story of a hero or a heroine who paid the price up to a point and then fell back. It cannot be. Our own soul knows that when our Saviour went to Calvary He must go, or He would have failed as you and I have failed. And this man, who wanted to know what it was to be a man, who wanted to understand himself, who wanted to discover the glory of God as it was revealed in and through himself, had to say, and he said

continually: "I die with Christ. I am crucified with Christ. The world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." The passion also of his life is this, "I count all things but loss, that I may know Christ and the fellowship of his sufferings, being gradually conformed unto his death." There was not one law for Christ and another for me. All men ought to have been perfectly loyal to the will of God. The commandment is just and good and true. We fail and our failure is the measure of our sin. He did not fail and hence can be our Saviour.

That same Cross revealed to this man a theme of horror, in that it displayed to him the awful depravity, the treachery, the weakness of the human heart. The measure of the distance between men and Christ is the measure of their sin and guilt. Paul knew himself as he faced that Cross. He knew himself, and through himself he knew his brother men. Sin! Who shall define it? It is so insidious in its approach, it seems so insignificant, and sometimes so excusable, as we review it in its separate imaginings or acts. We are prepared often, the best of us, to condone the acts of the worst of us, as we view them one by one.

And yet, Satan himself was once an angel. And Judas Iscariot was the confidential adviser of the spotless Son of God. It was to Judas that Jesus used to refer His acts of charity, that they might be performed. Judas was the hand of Christ when the beggar called for alms, and yet Judas could kiss Him in the darkness and by his kiss could betray Him to those who murdered Him. Oh, the sin of the human heart! Would that you and I might discover it, might hate it, might recoil from it in horror! This man learned the secret of his own failure and the peril of his own heart as he contemplated the Cross. It chastened and it humbled him.

And because sin is so real a thing, this man, and those associated with him, sharing in that early faith, came to speak of emancipation from it under a strange term, a term which was full of significance, the term of a price paid for our redemption; Christ crucified was a ransom for our sin.

Now, I suppose that more Christian people have recoiled from that term *ransom* than from any other theological term. They have said: "To whom was the price paid? Was it paid to God? Was it paid to the devil? To whom was the price paid?"

And they have stumbled over it and derided it and put the doctrine of redemption on one side because of it. Poor fools that they are. A ransom! Away yonder in India there is a father with his family. One day he goes down to his office and leaves his little boy playing upon the veranda. Coming back after an hour or two, he opens the garden gate and there is a sight that staggers the soul, for he sees a crouching man-eating tiger ready to spring upon his little boy. Not a moment is to be lost. There is no use in trying to call people to come to his help. With one great leap and an awful cry he himself springs forward to grapple with the beast, and he battles to save the child. The child goes unscathed into the house, but the father is bleeding, broken, mangled and dying in the grip and by the stroke of that savage tiger. The father has ransomed the boy. The price of the boy's life is the father's suffering and death. You do not say, "Did the father pay the price to the tiger, or to whom did he pay it?" The fact is, the price was paid. And here is a great fact with reference to you and to me that, apart altogether from our subtle philosophizing, Christ Himself, because we must be delivered from the fell monster who

would snatch us and destroy us, of whose presence we are oblivious as we go on with our pleasure, indulgence, or our ambition, goes single-handed and alone to grapple with and to destroy our foe—the price was heavy, but He paid it. Christ died for us. His blood was our ransom. Paul, having realized that great emancipating fact, gloried in it. It was something worth while, and the Christ Who could do that for him was a Christ Who must have him.

“Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all!”

Now, I said at the outset of my address to-night that it would be impossible for a man to touch every aspect of a theme like the doctrine of the Cross in one brief address. I have just suggested to you, dear Christian people, one or two aspects of this matter that we might meditate upon them together, that we might feel the challenge of them. The Cross was endured because in that way you and I might have hope. Christ thought our redemption a thing worth while. We ought to respect the selves that have been redeemed at such a cost. We do not belong to this world. We belong to the highest. “Man must needs

love the highest when he sees it." He must! You dare not rob your soul of the highest.

Is there some young man, some young woman, who has been trying the awful experiment of robbing the soul of the highest when it is seen? I beseech you, do not do that. It is not worth while. You are bigger than your dreams. You have never yet been able to gauge your potentiality.

"Down in the human heart, crushed by the
tempter,
Feelings lie buried which grace can restore."

For you and me there is an open door of possibility. The glory of life to a Christian is to become Christlike. I may not only have Christ for me. I may have "Christ in me, the hope of glory." Do you know that? Have you got it? If not, why not?

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